

DISRUPTIONS AND SECESSIONS IN METHODISM:

THEIR

CAUSES, CONSEQUENCES, AND LESSONS.

BY THE

REV THOMAS SWALLOW,

*Author of the Life of "An Old Methodist," Third Edition ;
"Spiritual Refreshment for Travellers to Zion," etc.*

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PREFACE.

THE following publication is intended to meet a long felt want, and will cover, in a connected form, ground not before occupied.

Larger works, such as those by Drs. Smith, and Stevens, have been confined in their attention, almost exclusively, to the Parent Body.. The branches have received but scant notice, and when noticed at all, have seldom, if ever, been fairly or justly treated.

This work is designed to supply, in some degree, what has hitherto been lacking. Although brief, it will be found comprehensive and impartial. It will also be seen that the writer's language is not disfigured by offensive personalities. The words employed by him are neither harsh nor unkind. From first to


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last his motto has been, "Speaking the truth in love;" at the same time, with all becoming fidelity.

To Methodists of the present generation, most of what the book contains possesses, what is considered, the attraction of novelty or freshness. For that reason it will, it is hoped, become a source of interest and profit. That it may be so is the sincere desire of the author.

T. S.

34, *Brownlow Street, Liverpool.*

*May 1st, 1880.*

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lege of reading it, will rise from the perusal with grateful emotion for such a favour. Evidently your mother was a woman whose natural talents placed her considerably above the mediocrity of her sex, and whose rich acquaintance with the deep things of God raised her to the dignity of a 'Mother in Israel.' Your Memoirs are admirably executed, and your reflections very suggestive, which will induce many to return to your book for a re-perusal."—REV. J. MACPHERSON, *Principal of the New College, Manchester.*

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"This is such a book as Wesley would have approved, and recommended to his societies. Its opinions are positive and pronounced. At the same time it is animated with a truly Catholic spirit, and beautified with a world-wide charity."—REV. C. C. McKECHNIE, *Editor of "The Primitive Methodist Quarterly Review."*

"I have read every word of the book, and consider it one of the best that has been written by any of our ministers."—REV. HENRY WOODCOCK, *Author of "Popery Unmasked," "Wonders of Grace," &c.*

May be obtained at the Primitive Methodist Conference Office, or, post free, from the Author.

## CHAPTER I.

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### EVENTS FROM 1744 TO 1792.

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IN perusing the pages of history we seem to be living in the ages that are past. A tolerable acquaintance with its records increases the stores of useful knowledge, and is, therefore, of great advantage to every intelligent mind. A writer of high renown has remarked that—"History, the great mistress of wisdom, furnishes examples of all kinds ; and every prudential, as well as moral precept, may be authorised by those events, which her enlarged mirror is able to present to our view." While this may be true of nations in general, it is not less so of the Church universal, in various or all of its sections. Hence it is true of Methodism, possessing, as it does, a history of which, in the main, there is no need to be ashamed. In the beginning its day was small as well as feeble ; yet its course was steady and triumphant. Those who were its determined foes endeavoured to crush it in, what may be termed, its very infancy ; but, He to whom all power belongs, said, "Destroy it not, for a

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blessing is in it." Some have declared that Methodism was never needed, and is not needed now. Such a declaration is not very creditable to the judgment or intelligence of those who make it. Never needed ! Let us search and see. What was the state of our own land, what the moral and religious condition of its inhabitants, at the commencement of the last century ? A master hand supplies an answer in the following words : " Nothing could be more repugnant to the prevailing taste, than the unadulterated word of God. The idea commonly entertained in England of a perfect sermon, was that of a discourse upon some moral topic, clear, correct, and argumentative, in the delivery of which the preacher must be free from all suspicion of being moved himself, or of intending to produce emotions in his hearers. Eternal concerns dropped out of the mind, and what remained of religion was confined to an attention to a few forms and ceremonies. The corruption of human nature, the necessity of the new birth, and justification by faith, were subjects abandoned to oblivion, or held up to ridicule and contempt. The consequence was, that an almost pagan darkness in the concerns of salvation prevailed. Lewdness, profaneness, indecency, reigned without control, were practised without a blush ; and the English became the most irreligious people upon earth ! " Such being the sad aspect of things at this mourn-

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ful juncture, it is not difficult to believe that some mighty agency *was* needed, to arrest the floodtide of evil and restore the masses of the ungodly to a purer faith, a holier life. By Divine appointment, that agency was Methodism, and under God it was well adapted to accomplish the stupendous work.

The name of John Wesley cannot be separated from the system of which, humanly speaking, he was the illustrious Founder; for although others, of kindred spirit, co-operated with him, it was mainly his own sanctified genius that made Methodism what it at first became. Surely, then, it was a day highly favoured and propitious for Britain—for the world!—when Wesley was born. Trained by a mother of distinguished ability, taught by the wisdom that cometh from above, he was a chosen vessel, fitted and made meet for the Master's use. The circumstances leading to his conversion were somewhat strange and long continued; but when the great change, from darkness to light, from bondage to liberty, took place, it was soon found his feet were set upon a rock, from which they were never to be moved. In due time he entered upon what may be called his life-work, in the true spirit of an inspired Apostle. And oh, what a life, what a work! Look at the wondrous record, not so much in the histories and biographies that have been published—excellent, no doubt, as many of them are—but in the four volumes of his Journals. There you see



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this thrice blessed man, in such a light as you can nowhere else behold him. From the outset to the close of his unexampled career, of self-sacrificing labour and devoted zeal, he was “stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.” In the face of fierce opposition, and, at first, brutal persecution, he calmly held on his way, and was enabled to say, “Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of His knowledge by us in every place.” So it was for more than fifty years ! until at length, “in age and feebleness extreme,” greatly honoured of God, beloved by tens of thousands of his spiritual children, he finished his course with joy, and was welcomed to a vast and full reward. “I am not sure,” said one, “of seeing John Wesley in heaven !” “Neither am I,” was the reply. “He will be so near the throne and we so distant from it, that we shall hardly *be able* to see him !”

What, it may now be enquired, was the outcome, the result, of what has been described ? One result may be designated reflex, or proximate. This great awakening produced a palpable, powerful, effect upon already existing communities. The Church of England was revived, to some extent, and its dormant energies were quickened into newness of life. Henceforth it was marked by increased spirituality. Some of its ministers were

more consistent in their conduct, more earnest in discharging the duties of their sacred office. On one occasion, a late Bishop of the Establishment was heard to acknowledge—and we give his own words—“That Wesley had done the Church a power of good.” This witness is undoubtedly true; and not a few of the clergy of the present day, very properly, venerate the name of Wesley and cherish the memory of his valiant deeds. The various classes of Dissenters, also, caught the flame of holy fire that had been kindled amongst the nations, and became increasingly zealous for the Lord of Hosts. But the immediate, the most important result was the existence of “the people called Methodists,” *not* churches, but “societies;” which, at the first Conference, after the decease of their Founder, that of 1791, numbered 136,622. These societies were governed by Mr. Wesley himself. “His power extended to both the greatest and smallest matters of government, and was absolute in all. He received members and expelled them. He appointed officers and removed them. He admitted preachers and dismissed them.” On this subject, very recently at a public meeting, an ex-president of the Wesleyan Conference spoke thus—“Wesley’s rule over his Societies was indeed a sublime despotism—a despotism, but a despotism sustained by a purity, a candour, a self-denial, an abundance of labours, a practical wisdom, of which

the world has seen no parallel in any other founder of an ecclesiastical community." It must be remembered, however, that the power he possessed came upon him unsought, undesired, and was purely the result of circumstances unforeseen, unprovided for. He evidently regarded it as a sacred deposit coming directly from God; and for that reason, as well as others, he would neither share it nor part with it! Moreover, this great power was used with affectionate tenderness, and, as he believed, for the good of all concerned. It seems as strange as it is true, that the people willingly, lovingly submitted to his rule; and that when he departed from the wonderful scenes of his earthly toil, his glorious success, he left his numerous societies in a state of prosperity and peace.

To adopt a procedure that was likely to impede such prosperity or destroy such peace, was a serious responsibility for any man, or any number of men, to incur. Those who join in angry disputation in the church of Christ without sufficient cause are guilty of conduct the most culpable. "Division," it has been observed, "amongst Christians, especially when it proceeds to a breach of communion, is so fraught with scandal, and so utterly repugnant to the genius of the gospel, that the suffrages of the whole Christian world have concurred in regarding it as an evil on no occasion to be incurred, but for the avoidance of a greater—

the violation of conscience.” Now this is just the point that requires attention. Some of the early Methodist preachers had, as they affirmed, conscientious objections to various things connected with the administration of Methodism. It is not unlikely the great founder, a man of rare sagacity, foresaw such would be the case. He feared there would be jealousy, partiality, amongst the preachers, leading to unseemly strife amongst the members. This, no doubt, induced him to write the following admonitory letter, read at the first Conference after his death.

“ My dear Brethren,

Some of our Travelling Preachers have expressed a fear, that after my decease, you would exclude them either from preaching in connection with you, or from some other privileges which they now enjoy. I know no other way to prevent any such inconvenience than to leave these my last words with you.

I beseech you, by the mercies of God, that you never avail yourselves of the Deed of Declaration, to assume any superiority over your brethren; but let all things go on among those Itinerants who choose to remain together, exactly in the same manner as when I was with you, so far as circumstances will permit.

In particular, I beseech you, if you ever loved

me, and if you now love God and your Brethren, to have no respect of persons, in stationing the preachers, in choosing children for Kingswood school, in disposing of the Yearly Contribution and the Preachers' fund, or any other public Money. But do all things with a single eye, as I have done from the beginning. Go on thus, doing all things without prejudice or partiality, and God will be with you even to the end.

JOHN WESLEY."

This excellent letter, taken from the Minutes of 1791, is dated Chester, April 7, 1785; and was, it is said, confided to the safe keeping of one of the preachers until the time of presentation, as before stated. What followed is well worthy of being reproduced:—

"N.B. The Conference have unanimously resolved, that all the preachers who are in full connexion with them, shall enjoy every privilege that the members of the Conference enjoy, agreeably to the above-written letter of our venerable deceased Father in the Gospel.

It may be expected, that the Conference make some observations on the death of Mr. Wesley; but they find themselves utterly inadequate to express their ideas and feelings on this awful and affecting event.

Their souls do truly mourn for their great loss;

and they trust they shall give the most substantial proofs of their veneration for the memory of their most esteemed Father and Friend, by endeavouring, with great humility and diffidence, to follow and imitate him in doctrine, discipline, and life."

In the year 1784 the famous "Poll Deed" was executed, for which, it was thought by some, there seemed to be an indispensable necessity. Accordingly, the author of it thus wrote, "Can any tell me how to mend it, or how it could have been made better? 'O yes. You might have inserted two hundred, as well as one hundred, preachers.' No; for then the expense of meeting would have been double, and all the Circuits would have been without preachers. 'But you might have named other preachers instead of these.' True, if I had thought as well of them as they did of themselves. But I did not; therefore I could do no otherwise than I did, without sinning against God and my own conscience. 'But what need was there for any deed at all?' There was the utmost need of it; without some authentic deed fixing the meaning of the term, Conference, the moment I died the Conference had been nothing. Therefore any of the proprietors of the land on which our preaching-houses were built might have seized them for their own use; and there would have been none to hinder them; for the Conference would have been nobody, a mere empty name.

You see then in all the pains I have taken about this absolutely necessary Deed of Declaration, I have been labouring, not for myself (I have no interest therein), but for the whole body of Methodists; in order to fix them upon such a foundation as is likely to stand as long as the sun and moon endure."

In reference to this document, or instrument, as it is sometimes termed, opinions were various and divided, as they still are. Some regarded it as complete, others as very defective. The Conference in general approved; expressing that approval in these words:—"We whose names are underwritten, do declare that Mr. Wesley was desired at the last Bristol Conference, without a dissentient voice, to draw up a Deed which should give a legal specification of the phrase, 'The Conference of the People called, Methodists:' and that the mode of doing it was entirely left to his judgment and discretion.

And we do also declare, that we do approve of the *Substance* and *Design* of the Deed which Mr. Wesley has accordingly executed and enrolled."

An impartial examination of the provisions of this Deed will serve to show, that the arbitrary, despotic spirit before spoken of, was now transferred to the preachers, "the legal hundred," exclusively. Lay influence, or representation, was not at all recognised nor provided for. This appears not a

little surprising, especially when it is considered that Mr. Wesley had in effect again and again said to the Conference, "The people will not obey you as they have obeyed me. They have submitted to me, but they will not submit in the same way to you." He knew full well that his preachers, even in their aggregate capacity, whatever they might claim, could not possess, with the consent of the people, and, therefore, could not use the power he himself possessed, and all along exercised. In the very nature of things it was utterly impossible. The truth of this was only too soon demonstrated. It was not long ere signs of unrest and disquietude were seen in different parts of the Connexion, even in the Conference itself; portending the conflict about to begin.

One of the first causes of agitation was in reference to the Sacraments or Ordinances, especially that of the Lord's Supper. From the first it had been the custom of Mr. Wesley, together with his preachers and people, to partake of this ordinance in the churches of the Establishment only from the hands of clergymen. It was felt, however, that this practice must be abandoned, or at all events very much modified. To us it may well be matter of astonishment that it was tolerated as long as it was; and can only be accounted for on the ground of strong prejudice, stern resolution, on the part of him, who, at one time, "thought the


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saving of souls almost a sin, if it were not done in a church." He never intended to form his societies into a distinct church, neither that he or they should be separated from the Church so long by law established. Hence his unbending opposition to anything or everything that might tend or lead to separation. "Exhort," said he, "all our people to keep close to the Church and Sacrament." Again he says, "For many years I have earnestly advised, both in public and in private, all in connexion with me, who have been brought up in the Established Church, to continue therein; and of consequence to attend the service of the church at all opportunities; and my reasons for doing so I published to all the world more than twenty years ago." A little more than a year before his death Mr. Wesley thus solemnly delivered his unchanged view on the same subject:—"I never had any design of separating from the Church: I have no such design now. I do not believe that Methodists in general design it, when I am no more seen. I do, and will do, all that is in my power to prevent such an event. I declare once more, that I live and die a member of the Church of England; and that none who regard my judgment or advice will ever separate from it." In those days the Methodists were not considered or called Dissenters; nor, indeed, are they in these by all. Some years since a minister published a pamphlet in which he

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attempted to prove that the Wesleyans *never were* Dissenters, and were *not so now*. This was answered by another minister, who was most certainly master of the situation, on the other side. If Wesleyans are not Dissenters, then, what are they? It has been said, "The Wesleyans are by Providence placed in a middle position between the Established Church of this country and the Dissenters." "A somewhat pompous paraphrase," it was replied, "of the man who makes his seat between two stools!" It is mere trifling, or something worse, to say that all Methodists are not Dissenters. They are separated by organization, doctrine, polity, discipline, wealth; in short, the separation is absolute, complete—and judging from what we have recently seen and heard—it is likely to be lasting. If the day, much to be desired, should ever come in which the Church shall be Dis-established, Dis-endowed, then, perhaps, the various Methodist bodies might unite with, what would then be the Episcopal FREE Church of England. But that day is not yet. It seems to belong to the far distant future.

In returning to the matter more immediately before us, we shall see that on this Sacrament question two differing parties came to the front. As in most other questions admitting of diversity of opinion, so in this, there were two sides. The first party, and by no means a small one, desired, nay,

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insisted, that the Lord's Supper should be administered in their own places of worship, by the hands of their own preachers. Also, that they should have their religious services during what were called church hours, or otherwise, as might best suit their own convenience—a privilege which had not heretofore been allowed. Petitions and letters from office-bearers and members were addressed to the Conference, which, if report be true, did not meet with a very hearty welcome. It is said to be a “singular fact (which not until some time afterwards was made public), that all, or nearly all, these memorials were burnt without being opened.” This might result from a prudent consideration of the words of Solomon: “The beginning of strife *is as* when one letteth out water; therefore leave off contention *before* it be meddled with.” “The best construction,” says the writer before quoted, “which can be put upon this unceremonious treatment of the societies is, that the Conference was embarrassed by the difficulties of its position, and not having any plan matured by which conflicting opinions could be satisfactorily met, resolved to postpone the consideration of any such plan for the time being, and therefore disposed of all communications by destroying them.” The most correct record is, “nearly all;” for *all* were not destroyed. It would appear from the Minutes of 1792, that a few, at least, of the petitioners were

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treated with respectful attention, receiving, as they did, the following reply:—

“To the Members of our Societies, who desire to receive the Lord’s Supper from the hands of their own preachers.

Very Dear Brethren,

The Conference desire us to write to you, in their name, in the most tender and affectionate manner, and to inform you of the event of their deliberations concerning the administration of the Lord’s Supper.

After debating the subject time after time, we were greatly divided in sentiment. In short, we knew not what to do, that peace and union might be preserved. At last one of the senior brethren (Mr. Pawson) proposed that we should commit the matter to God by putting the question to the Lot, considering that the Oracles of God declare, that ‘the Lot causeth contentions to cease, and parteth between the mighty.’ And again, that ‘the Lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord.’ And considering also that we have the example of the Apostles themselves, in a matter which, we thought, all things considered, of less importance.

We accordingly prepared the Lots; and four of us prayed. God was surely then present, yea, His glory filled the room. Almost all the Preachers

were in tears, and, as they afterwards confessed, felt an undoubted assurance that God Himself would decide. Mr. Adam Clarke was then called on to draw the Lot, which was, 'You shall not administer the Sacrament the ensuing year.' All were satisfied. All submitted. All was peace. Every countenance seemed to testify that every heart said, 'It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth Him good.' A minute was then formed according to the previous explanation of the Lots, that the Sacrament should not be administered in our Connexion, for the ensuing year, except in London. The prohibition reaches the Clergy of the Church of England as well as the other brethren.

We do assure you, dear brethren, we should have been perfectly resigned, if the Lot had fallen on the other side. Yea, we should, as far as Christian prudence and expediency would have justified, have encouraged the administration of the Lord's Supper by the Preachers; because we had not a doubt but God was uncommonly present on the occasion, and did Himself decide.

Signed, in behalf of the Conference,  
ALEXANDER MATHER, *President.*  
THOMAS COKE, *Secretary.*"

While the first party were engaged in persistently urging their plea, the second were not slow

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to urge theirs, with equal determination, and in a course directly opposite. While one laboured to effect the required alteration, the other did all in their power to prevent it. “Deputations from Trustees assembled with an intention to compel the carrying out of Mr. Wesley’s plan of rigid adherence to the Church, requiring that there should be no preaching in Church hours, and no Sacrament administered but by Church ministers.” This unhappy state of things involved the Conference in great difficulty and perplexity, as will be evident from—

“An address to the Members of the Methodist Societies throughout England, from the Conference assembled at Leeds, August 6, 1793.

Dear Brethren,

We feel it our duty to send you this address, lest the insinuations of any, who are enemies to our prosperity and unity, should grieve your minds, and injure the work of God. Our venerable father, who is gone to his great reward, lived and died a member of the Church of England. His attachment to it was so strong and so unshaken, that nothing but irresistible necessity induced him to deviate from it in any degree. In many instances God Himself obliged him to do this : He powerfully called him forth into the streets and open fields, and afterwards raised to his assistance


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hundreds of men, who never passed through the usual forms of ordination. To all these evident providences of God, Mr. Wesley submitted, though at first with great reluctance. In consequence he found himself obliged to erect chapels, which were neither consecrated according to the usual method of the Church of England, nor in the least subject to the direction of the National Episcopacy. In all these things he deviated from the Establishment, merely on the ground of unavoidable necessity; or, which is the same thing to a truly pious soul, from the clear manifested providence and will of God.

A dilemma, or difficulty, of a similar kind has been experienced by us since the death of Mr. Wesley. A few of our Societies have repeatedly importuned us to grant them the liberty of receiving the Lord's Supper from their own Preachers. But, desirous of adhering most strictly to the plan which Mr. Wesley laid down, we again and again denied their request. The subject, however, is now come to its crisis. We find that we have no alternative but to comply with their requisition, or entirely to lose them! O brethren, we 'hate putting away!' especially those who are members of the mystical body of Christ, and our dearly beloved brethren; and whose only error, where they do err, is that of the judgment, and not of the heart. And can we suffer these to forsake their faithful

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pastors and possibly to run into the jaws of some ravening wolf, when the point in contest must be allowed by all to be *unessential* to salvation ?

But we are not insensible that our brethren on the other side, may justly urge, ‘Are not our interests as dear to you as theirs ? Why then will you grieve us in so tender a point ? Why will you oppose us in those particulars, which we think of very great importance to the prosperity of Zion ? Why will you force upon us a term of communion to which we never consented, or expect us to remain united to those who will be ever grieving us, by pressing the necessity of compliance with *that*, which we judge to be highly injurious to the cause of God ?’

Such is the dilemma, dear brethren, to which we have been reduced. We allow the full force of the arguments, which the brethren, who disapprove of the administration of the Lord’s Supper, urge as above : nor can we, on any consideration, lay on them a new term of communion, or suffer a *single person* among them to be grieved by the reasonings of those who wish for an innovation on our plan. We therefore weighed this delicate subject with the greatest seriousness and deliberation, feeling the tenderest pity for those of our brethren who thought themselves aggrieved ; and came finally to the following resolution : ‘That the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper shall not be adminis-

tered by the Preachers in any part of our Connexion, except where the whole Society is unanimous for it, and *will not be contented without it*; and, in even those few exempt Societies, it shall be administered, as far as practicable, in the evening only, and according to the form of the Church of England. For we could not bear that the Sacrament, which was instituted by our Lord as a bond of peace and union, should become a bone of contention; and are determined never to sanction the administration of that holy ordinance, for the purpose of strife and division.

You may clearly see from hence, dear brethren, that it is *the people*, in the instances referred to, who have forced us into this further deviation from our union to the Church of England. Still we wish to be united to it as a body at large. The few Societies which answer the description mentioned in the above resolution, need but have a small influence on the whole Connexion. We cannot, however, we will not part with any of our dear flock, who love God and man, on account of unessential points. For we love you *all*, and are the servants of you all for Jesu's sake. But we entreat our Societies at large (the few exempt cases excepted) to continue, as usual, in connexion with the Church of England; and we shall, with great cheerfulness and contentment, labour among them according to that simple original plan of Metho-

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dism, established and left to us by our venerable friend.

We remain, dear Brethren,  
Your most affectionate Servants  
and faithful Pastors."

The apparent concessions and arrangements now made, so far from allaying, seemed only to increase the strife. The contest became general throughout the Connexion, threatening not only its peace, but, as some thought, its very existence. Letters and pamphlets were printed and circulated in all directions. The preachers themselves entered the field of conflict, receiving in some instances, the approval of Conference, in others, its censure and condemnation. At length the matter so long agitated was partially settled, on the basis of Conference legislation. The liberty sought for was gained, and ultimately the administration of Baptism and the Lord's Supper became an important part in the usages of Methodism.

Scarcely, however, had this struggle terminated before it was followed by the commencement of another. The first breach in the walls of a besieged city is not unfrequently followed by a second or a third, until the city is taken. When the standard is set up, those who contend for the rights of liberty sometimes find that the area of righteous combat becomes enlarged, and while they

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advance the field still spreads out before them. The achievement of one point, is only the signal for the endeavour to compass something beyond.

Thus it was with those who have been designated the first Methodist Reformers. In what had been accomplished they believed they had established, or at least laid down, some of the first principles of ecclesiastical freedom, and resolved to proceed further in the same course. The next step to be taken was like an innovation upon the sacred enclosure of the Conference itself. The measures proposed were thought to be dangerous and revolutionary. Nevertheless the hour had arrived and also the man.

## CHAPTER II.

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FROM 1792 TO 1797

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ALEXANDER KILHAM was the first Wesleyan Minister who ventured to advocate lay-delegation to Conference. He had already taken a prominent part in the discussion of previous questions, but now felt it a duty incumbent upon him, to approach the consideration of still higher matters. Nor was he without the apparent sympathy of some of the most influential preachers, in the arduous work he attempted to do. In the "Jubilee Volume of The Methodist New Connexion," we find the following record: "Mr. Kilham contended not only for liberty respecting the Sacraments, but for the introduction of other important privileges, among which was the right of lay-delegation; and this object appeared at one time to be gaining ground among those preachers who were united with him in opposing the assumed prerogatives of the trustees. In fact, at that period, these preachers stood between the people and the intolerant trustees, who seemed resolved to use their power to repress the spirit of

the people, and perpetuate their bondage to the Establishment. Some of the most eminent ministers in the Connexion held correspondence with Mr. Kilham, expressing their sympathy with his views, and their thorough conviction that the government of Methodism must be remodelled, and such a constitution be adopted as would unite the people with the ministers in the government and administration."

Mr. Bradburn wrote to Mr. Kilham an affectionate but confidential letter, in which he says:—"We must have a Methodist constitution or plan of discipline explained, and we shall in due time."

Mr. Pawson, in January, 1795, published a pamphlet, in which there are some strong expressions in favour of the people's liberty. Addressing the members in general, he says,—“You have not only built our chapels, but you bear every burden of a temporal kind. Why then should you be excluded from having a proper share in the government, or at least in the regulation of the Church of God? Can a few trustees be your representatives? Are your consciences to be wholly subject to their will? Do you not know, that, as to many of them, their judgment stands directly opposed to yours? Can even the preachers be your representatives, so as to decide absolutely for you in things not enjoined of God? They are your servants for Christ's sake; and I trust a very great majority are willing to

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comply with your wishes, and to serve you in everything, which tends to the glory of God and your souls' salvation. But others of them differ in judgment from you ; therefore you must maintain your freedom, and assert your right to every ordinance of God.

At any rate, Brethren, keep your liberty. If you think it not safe to trust the Conference with your spiritual privileges, then, in the name of the Lord, I intreat you to keep them in your own power, and insist upon it, whenever it shall so happen that any considerable number of your society shall wish either to have preaching in Church hours, or the Sacrament in your own chapels, that your assistant shall call the trustees, leaders, stewards, and local preachers in that circuit together, and these shall take the matter into serious consideration. And if it shall appear to a majority of them, that it would be most for the glory of God, either to have the one or the other, or both, then in God's name let it be so. Or if this method do not meet with your approbation, then let your whole society assemble together and consider the matter as in the presence of God ; and if it shall be found agreeable to the majority that you shall have the above privileges, let it be done accordingly. And let this Christian and brotherly method be always taken, in order to make known your mind to the Conference. Remember, O ye Methodists ! that the



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reign of Popery is past and gone ; let it never be restored to you under any shape or name. In the name of Him who bought you with His blood, maintain the rights and liberties of your own consciences.”

Dr. Coke, too, in a letter to Mr. Kilham, expressed his sense of the absolute and despotic powers possessed by the Conference, and of the sheer justice of admitting the laity to a participation of power in the management of the body. He says : “Religious liberty requires that the people should have some negative in respect to their ministers. Hitherto, we have been, since the death of Mr. Wesley, the most perfect aristocracy, perhaps, existing on the face of the earth. The people have had no power ; we the *whole*, in the fullest sense that can be conceived.”

Afterwards in another letter to Mr. Kilham, Mr. Bradburn says :—“Fear not my firmness to the side I have espoused, and endeavoured to help forward. I am at work, but my agents are at Manchester, &c. I find this the most likely method to gain my point. I will do all I can consistently with our keeping together, to have religious liberty ; but I will, for the present, give up a good deal, rather than divide the body. We have really nothing to fear ; the people are the radix of all power in our Connexion, and they are not to be trifled with any longer.”

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The agitation, now fairly commenced, rapidly spread and greatly increased. To such an extent, indeed, was this the case, that the Conference of 1795 deemed it necessary to adopt certain measures with a view to appease the complainants, and preserve, or restore, the peace of the body. The resolutions adopted are contained in what has been called the "Plan of Pacification." As very important issues were involved in this Plan, and opinions with regard to its provisions very conflicting, we give an extract of it from the Minutes, in order that the reader may form his own judgment.

“To the Members of the Methodist Society.

Dearly Beloved Brethren,

We beg leave to state to you what has been done in our present Conference in order to establish a general and lasting peace and union throughout our Connexion.

When we assembled together, our hearts were most deeply touched with the awful situation of our affairs. We trembled at the thought of a division and its dreadful consequences; and therefore determined to set apart the first day of the Conference as a day of solemn and real fasting and prayer. God was indeed in the midst of us; and we all felt a confidence, that a solid foundation would be laid for lasting peace and unity. When we met in Conference on the second day,

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we saw the necessity of appointing a Committee, to prepare a plan of general pacification ; and, that the Committee might be men of our own choice in the fullest sense of the words, we resolved that they should be chosen by ballot. Every preacher, therefore, in full Connexion, gave in nine papers, with a name upon each (nine being the predetermined number of the Committee). The ballots were received, and Messrs. Mather and Pawson were desired to retire and count the votes. When they returned, they gave in the following names as the first upon the list, viz.: Joseph Bradford, who was President, John Pawson, Alexander Mather, Thomas Coke, William Thompson, Samuel Bradburn, Joseph Benson, Henry Moore, and Adam Clarke. We were astonished at the choice, and clearly saw it was of God. It evidenced beyond a doubt the impartiality of the body of preachers ; for there must have existed a majority on one side or the other, in respect to the disputed points ; and yet they voted for a *mixed* Committee. The Committee accordingly met six evenings successively, and sat each evening, after all the fatigues of the Conference, for about three hours and a half. Their plan was at last completed, and laid before the Conference, who, with the alteration of a single article, passed them unanimously. After this, two or three more articles were agreed upon, under the title of *Addenda*, in order to give the

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completest satisfaction, and to remove every obstacle to a lasting peace.

ARTICLES OF AGREEMENT FOR GENERAL  
PACIFICATION.

I. CONCERNING THE LORD'S SUPPER, BAPTISM, &c.

What is contained in this section is similar to what has been inserted before on the same subjects, and therefore, to avoid repetition, we pass on to section

II. CONCERNING DISCIPLINE.

1. The appointment of preachers shall remain solely with the Conference, and no Trustee, or number of Trustees, shall expel or exclude from their chapel or chapels, any preachers so appointed.

2. Nevertheless, if the majority of the Trustees, or the majority of the Stewards and Leaders of any Society, believe that any preacher appointed for their Circuit, is immoral, erroneous in doctrines, deficient in abilities, or that he has broken any of the rules above mentioned, they shall have authority to summon the preachers of the District and all the Trustees, Stewards, and Leaders of the Circuit, to meet in their chapel on a day and hour appointed, (sufficient time being given.) The Chairman of the District shall be President of the assembly, and every Preacher, Steward, and Leader, shall have a single vote, the Chairman possessing also the casting voice. And if the

majority of the meeting judge that the accused preacher is immoral, erroneous in doctrines, deficient in abilities, or has broken any of the rules above mentioned, he shall be considered as removed from that Circuit ; and the District Committee shall, as soon as possible, appoint another preacher for the Circuit, instead of the preacher so removed ; and shall determine among themselves how the removed preacher shall be disposed of till the Conference, and shall have authority to suspend the said preacher from all public duties till the Conference, if they judge proper. The District Committee shall also supply, as well as possible, the place of the removed preacher, till another preacher be appointed. And the preacher thus appointed, and all other preachers, shall be subject to the above mode of trial. And if the District Committee do not appoint a preacher for that Circuit, instead of the removed preacher, within a month after the aforesaid removal, or do not fill up the place of the removed preacher till another preacher be appointed, the majority of the said Trustees, Stewards, and Leaders being again regularly summoned, shall appoint a preacher for the said Circuit, provided he be a member of the Methodist Connexion, till the ensuing Conference.

3. If any preacher refuse to submit to the above mode of trial, in any of the cases mentioned above, he shall be considered as suspended till the

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Conference. And if any Trustees expel from any chapel, a preacher, by their own *separate* authority, the preachers appointed for that circuit, shall not preach in that chapel till the ensuing Conference, or till a trial take place, according to the mode mentioned above.

4. If any Trustees expel or exclude a preacher, by their own *separate* authority, from any chapel in any circuit, the chairman of the district shall summon the members of the District Committee, the Trustees of that circuit who have not offended, and the Stewards and Leaders of the circuit. And the members of such assembly shall examine into the evidence on both sides; and if the majority of them determine, that the state of the Society in which the exclusion took place, requires that a new chapel should be built, previous to the meeting of the Conference, every proper step shall be immediately taken for erecting such chapel. And no step shall on any account be taken, to erect a chapel for *such purpose*, before the meeting of the Conference, till such meeting be summoned, and such determination made.

5. No preacher shall be suspended, or removed from his Circuit by any District Committee, except he have the privilege of the trial before mentioned.

6. The hundred preachers mentioned in the enrolled Deed, and their successors, are the only

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legal persons, who constitute the Conference : and we think the junior brethren have no reason to object to this proposition, as they are regularly elected according to seniority.

7. Inasmuch as in drawing up the preceding regulations, we have laboured to restore and preserve the peace and unity of the society, and, in order thereto, have endeavoured to keep the preachers out of all disputes on the subjects therein specified : Be it understood, that any preacher who shall disturb the peace of the Society, by speaking for or against the introduction of the Lord's Supper in our Societies, or concerning the old or new plan, so called, shall be subject to the trial and penalties before mentioned.

8. In order that the utmost impartiality may be manifest in these regulations, for the peace of the whole body, we also resolve, that if any Local Preacher, Trustee, Steward, or Leader, shall disturb the peace of the Society, by speaking for or against the introduction of the Lord's Supper, or concerning the old or new plan, so called, the Superintendent of the Circuit, or the majority of the Trustees, Stewards, and Leaders of the Society so disturbed, shall have authority to summon a meeting of the Travelling Preachers of the Circuit, and the Trustees, Stewards, and Leaders of that society. Evidence shall be examined on both sides ; and if the charge be proved, the Superinten-

dent Preacher shall expel from the Society the person so offending.

ADDENDA.

1. The Conference, by no means, wishes to divide any Society, by the introduction of the Lord's Supper, and therefore expect that the majority of the Stewards and Leaders, who desire the Lord's Supper among themselves, testify in writing to the Conference, that they are persuaded no separation will be made thereby.

2. The Sacrament shall not be administered to a Society in any private house, within two miles of any Methodist chapel, in which it is regularly administered.

3. We all agree, that the pulpit shall not be a vehicle of abuse.

4. It has been our general custom, never to appoint or remove a Leader or Steward, without first consulting the Leaders and Stewards of the Society; and we are resolved to walk by the same rule.

5. To prevent as much as possible, the progress of *strife* and *debate*, and consequent divisions in our Connexion, no pamphlet or printed letter shall be circulated among us, without the author's name, *and the postage or carriage paid.*

6. Nothing contained in these rules shall be construed to violate the rights of Trustees, as expressed in their respective deeds.

Thus, beloved brethren, have we done our utmost


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to satisfy every party, and to unite the whole. You, by your Trustees on the one hand, and your proper representatives, the Leaders and Stewards on the other, are to determine concerning the introduction of the Sacraments, or the service in Church hours, among yourselves. We have gone abundantly farther. We have, in some degree, deposited our characters and usefulness in your hands, or the hands of your representatives, by making them judges of our morals, doctrines, and gifts. We apprehend, that we could have made no further sacrifice, without sapping the foundations of Methodism, and particularly destroying the itinerant plan. O brethren, be as zealous for peace and unity in your respective Societies, as your Preachers have been in this blessed Conference. Let the majorities and minorities on both sides, exercise the utmost forbearance towards each other : let them mutually concede one to the other as far as possible, and, by thus bearing each other's burdens, fulfil the law of Christ. Let all resentment be buried in eternal oblivion ; and let contention and strife be for ever banished from the borders of our Israel.

Surely our present complete and happy union, so contrary to the fears of many, is a signal of good times. God will, we believe, pour out His Spirit upon us more largely than ever ; and, by the exercise of His most gracious prerogative, bring abundance of good out of all our past evils.

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To His grace and holy keeping we commend you. May nothing ever separate you and us from the love of God, or from each other ; but may you be our crown of rejoicing in the great day of the Lord.

Signed, in behalf of the Conference,

JOSEPH BRADFORD, *President*,

THOMAS COKE, *Secretary*."

*Manchester, August 6, 1795.*

It is only reasonable to suppose that in constructing this plan of pacification, the Conference did what they thought best under the very trying circumstances in which they were placed, but still, it seemed as if the strong points, in other questions pressing for settlement, were untouched or altogether passed over. Some professed to be contented, while others were more than ever dissatisfied.

"~~With regard~~ to discipline, there was much denied, and a little conceded. ~~The~~ admission of lay-representatives to district meetings and Conference was still refused, and absolute power with respect to the appointment of church officers, and the calling out of preachers, was still left in the hands of the superintendent minister. Although the Articles of Pacification passed the Conference, there was a very respectable minority who were not satisfied with them, and strongly objected to the ambiguity of some expressions employed therein. Mr. Kilham drew up an address to the Con-

ference, protesting against them. Fifty-eight of the preachers signed the document, and amongst them we recognise the names of some of the most respectable ministers of the community. Supported by these signatures, the address was presented to the Conference, but it was not permitted to be read.

Shortly after Conference, Mr. Kilham, impressed with the conviction that permanent peace would never be established in the body until such a constitution was adopted as secured to the people New Testament rights and privileges, felt it a duty to make another effort for the attainment of this important object. Under this impression he wrote a pamphlet entitled, 'The Progress of Liberty.' In this work he adverted to the course of Mr. Wesley in the progress of Methodism, showing that he had acted from time to time as altered circumstances required; he glanced at the alterations which had been effected since Mr. Wesley's death, and analysed the Articles of Pacification, pointing out their defects, &c.

In the second part of this work he lays down the 'Outlines of a Constitution,' which he humbly proposes to the consideration of 'The People called Methodists.'

This outline embraces the following particulars:—

'First, That instead of the preachers having the

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sole power to admit and expel members, these acts should be done with consent of the people.

Second, That the members should have a voice in choosing their own leaders.

Third, That the local preachers, instead of being appointed by the circuit preacher, should be examined and approved by the leaders' and quarterly meetings, with which meetings also should rest the power of receiving and dismissing them.

Fourth, That as it was impossible to allow the people to choose their own ministers on account of the itinerant plan, yet the quarterly meetings should have a voice in recommending preachers to travel.

Fifth, That lay-delegates, appointed by the quarterly meetings, should attend the district meetings.

And, lastly, he proposes, with submission to the preachers and the Connexion at large, to appoint one or two lay-delegates from every district-meeting to attend the Conference.'

For publishing the pamphlet, advocating these essential principles of freedom, Mr. Kilham was tried and expelled from the ministry at the ensuing Conference, 1796."

Of this transaction Mr. Kilham thus speaks :—

“ When I appeared at their bar, and received the final sentence of expulsion, the preachers did it by their President with all the gloom and silence of an Inquisition. To make my expulsion secure, it

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was not only confirmed by the preachers standing up and unanimously agreeing to it, but every person was required to sign a paper with his own hand, of the justice and uprightness in that matter. The paper was taken to the communion table, and laid on the place where the memorials of the body and blood of Christ are presented every Sabbath day, and Mr. Bradburn (I cannot relate the tragical story without weeping), who had formerly professed himself a friend to liberty and the rights of the people—Mr. Bradburn, I say, stood by the rails of the Lord's table, like the governor of an Inquisition, to see that all his brethren signed. Here we find about one hundred and fifty preachers of the gospel of Christ confirming the sentence of condemnation in a way unheard of in the records of Methodism, if not in the records of ecclesiastical history. This is a sufficient proof, that the leading men in that process considered what I had written (to enlighten and save our people from many evils that they groan beneath,) as worse than any crime that had ever been examined in any former Conference."

It may be as well to insert what is recorded in the Minutes of Conference for the same year.

"August the 8th. A letter was received from Mr. Kilham, the contents of which seemed to indicate some desire to return. The Conference, willing to leave him no shadow of excuse, ap-

pointed (with his consent) a Committee to converse with him on his case, and to consider any proposal he might make. The Committee consisted of the President, Messrs. Mather, Pawson, Thompson, Bradburn, Benson, Bradford, and Moore. After spending much time with him, and giving him an opportunity to say what he thought proper, treating him (as he acknowledged) with the utmost respect and tenderness, the amount of what he said was, 'That Mr. Mather and Mr. Benson had said (in their pamphlets), that it was our general custom to act in the manner he desired, and that he only wished that general custom to be made law.'

The Rules of Pacification were then proposed to him as introductory to a further explanation. His answer was, 'he thought many of them unscriptural, and he could not conform to them.'

The Secretary having read the above report to the Conference, it was finally determined that he could have no place in our Connexion while he continued in his present opinions."

What immediately follows is a grievous manifestation of arbitrary ministerial power.

"Q. 29. What can be done to prevent unruly or unthinking men from disturbing our people?

A. Let no man, nor number of men, in our Connexion, on any account or occasion circulate letters, call meetings, do, or attempt to do, any-

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thing *new*, till it has been first appointed by the Conference."

On this, a late powerful writer remarked that, "In point of arrogance, modern history, apart from Rome, furnishes no parallel to this most monstrous injunction. It is fit to rouse the spirit of freeborn Englishmen to frenzy!" Well, it would scarcely be worth while to get to that state of feeling. Rather, let us say, it is enough to cause "freeborn Englishmen" to look upon those who could make such a law with extreme suspicion, to watch very carefully their movements, and endeavour to impose some effectual check upon the progress they might be intending to make.

We have seen how it fared with Mr. Kilham in the day of trial. Perhaps no words could be too strong in condemnation of the mean and cowardly conduct of those who forsook him when he most needed their succour and support. They had encouraged him in the course he had taken, by the repeated expression of their sympathy, their approval; they had avowed their readiness to stand by him in the maintenance of the views he had adopted; but, alas! when the time for united action came they were found—not for him, and the cause he pleaded—but against both the one and the other. Had they acted otherwise, acted a manly and consistent part, it is likely, not to say certain, that the government of Methodism, would

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*then* have been placed upon a right foundation, and the wreck and ruin, the trouble and sorrow witnessed in after years would have been prevented.

Of Mr. Kilham's character, as a Christian and a minister, a very favourable estimate can be formed. He was a man of considerable ability, as what he has written will clearly show. He was also a man of amiable and forgiving spirit. Although expelled, and that without sufficient cause, from the ministry, from the church of his choice—a church he evidently dearly loved—he manifested no malevolence or re-creation, on account of the wrongs inflicted upon him. He had no desire to leave the Methodist body, least of all had he any intention of becoming the founder of another. After his dismissal, in a letter addressed to the Conference, through the President, he thus speaks: “Ever since I came out to travel, I never had the least desire to leave the Connexion, but wished to spend and be spent in the work of the ministry.”

Some have given a very different estimate to what we have felt it right and just to give of Mr. Kilham. He, and those who afterwards felt it their duty to co-operate with him, have been designated “self-willed, unchristian, turbulent, factious men.” Nor is this much to be wondered at. It is not less difficult than honourable, to engage in this kind of work, the work of aspersing the motives and characters of those who differ from us in opinion or



practice. "It is easy," remarks the late Robert Hall, "to brand a passion for liberty with the odious epithet of faction; no two things, however, can be more opposite. Faction is a combination of a few to oppress the liberties of many; the love of freedom is the impulse of an enlightened and presiding spirit, ever intent upon the welfare of the community or body to which it belongs, and ready to give the alarm, when it beholds any unlawful conspiracy, whether it be of rulers or of subjects, with a design to oppress it." Several persons have reverted to the close of Mr. Kilham's life, and refusing, as it were, to be silent even amid the solemnities of his death, have published to the world that this good man "passed away under a cloud."

Akin to this is a statement contained in a work entitled "A Portraiture of Methodism," by Jonathan Crowther, who it is probable was present and acted his part on the occasion spoken of:—"The most notable act of this Conference was the expulsion of Alexander Kilham, for divers things which he had lately published in a pamphlet, called 'The Progress of Liberty,' and others of the like nature and tendency. In many respects his conduct in these publications was unjustifiable. Afterwards in the pulpits of Dissenters, where he gained admission, and from the press, he endeavoured to justify his conduct, and to bring the preachers into contempt with the Methodists, and with all men. But his

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race was soon run, for December 20, 1798, he died of a short illness, occasioned by a bone sticking in his throat. Prior to this, however, he had effected great divisions in various parts of our Connexion."

Are we to infer from this elegant piece of history, that the transgressor had committed a sin unto death, and was thus visited by a painful, punitive dispensation of Providence? It reminds us of the heathenish and superstitious notion, the principle of which is implied in the question of the disciples of old, "Master, who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" John Milton, who had been Cromwell's secretary, was once addressed by Charles the II., on this wise, "Mr. Milton, don't you think your blindness is a judgment upon you for writing against my father?" The great poet replied, "If every affliction is to be regarded as a judgment from the Almighty, your Majesty should remember, that, although I have lost my eyes, your Royal father lost his head!" In some instances we obtain our strongest convictions of truth by what may be termed the power of contrast, hence the reader will mark what follows.

"About five weeks before his death, Mr. Kilham went on a toilsome journey into Wales amidst very inclement weather. But he was not without consolation. While there he wrote: 'After morning preaching I could not but weep for joy, the Redeemer appeared so precious and His ways so delightful.

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It is impossible to express the joy I felt in seeking the salvation of my fellow-creatures.' On his return from Wales to Nottingham, he was evidently weak and much exhausted. On Wednesday, December 12, 1798, it was thought he took cold, in walking home from the country after preaching. The next morning he had a violent pain in his back and shoulders. The pain increased, and on Friday morning it was excessive. On Saturday evening he was electrified, and found relief from it. A blister also was applied that night. On Tuesday morning he appeared to be recovering, although he had slept so little. In the evening, after tea, Mr. and Mrs. Smith, of Hanley, being present, and Mr. Smith's weak state making it necessary for him to retire soon to rest, Mr. Kilham engaged in prayer with extraordinary enlargement of heart and depth of feeling. On Thursday morning, December 20th, after a restless night, he complained of extreme pain, and several times brought up large quantities of blood. While in this distressing state he said, 'I am going to my Redeemer. If I am dying now, tell all the world that Jesus is precious.' When sympathy with him was shown by Mrs. Kilham and others, he remarked, 'As the afflictions of Christ abound, His consolations abound in my soul.' Soon after he stated, 'What I have done in regard to the Methodist Connexion, so far from repenting, I rejoice in it at this moment. I bless God that He

made me an instrument of doing it. O that I had done it more faithfully.' His last words were— 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' "

The proceedings we have described in preceding pages, were quickly followed by the formation of the Methodist New Connexion, which soon numbered 5,000 members. Though Mr. Kilham was not the founder of the new body, in the sense, or to the extent, that Mr. Wesley was of the old, yet he took a very prominent part in the work. Three preachers, Messrs. W. Thom, S. Eversfield, and A. Cummins, voluntarily left the Conference and cast in their lot with Mr. Kilham. "These brethren with a number of delegates from the people met together in Ebenezer Chapel, Leeds, on the 9th of August, 1797, when Mr. Thom was elected President, and the basis of a Constitution adopted in conformity with the principles which had so long been publicly set forth and advocated." Advocated, it may be added, by Mr. Kilham at a cost so great to himself in the pamphlet before referred to. "Such," says the Rev. Dr. W. Cooke, "were the principles adopted as elements of the Constitution of the New Connexion at its origin, and such remain its essential and distinguishing features at the present day."

Here it may be stated, that all the Methodist Branches, since brought into existence, have, in the main, gone upon the same lines, constituted the principles of their church government on a similar

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basis. And even the parent body, "the mother of us all," seems to be following in the same direction. In the plan recently inaugurated, called "lay-representation in Conference," is to be found the shadow at least of good things yet to come.

It ought to be no reproach to the New Connexion that at first, and for many years, its progress was slow and feeble. It had to advance in the face of misrepresentation, of opposition, of no ordinary kind. On this very account, however, some still speak disparagingly, and affirm there must be something defective or impracticable in the system itself, or it would have been more popular, and the community more prosperous. The most obvious facts in history, which will readily occur to every thoughtful, well-informed mind, at once confute such a theory. If the Connexion has not been so progressive as might have been expected and looked for, one cause, amongst others, may be the want of an enlightened and practical appreciation of its distinctive and liberal principles on the part of the general public, rather than any particular defect in its polity or administration. Most likely, from the very first, this has been the case, and is so, to some extent, even now. But it is gratifying to learn that in regard to progress, especially in a numerical point of view, there has of late been a marked improvement. While for the year 1879, all the other Methodist sections

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have reported a decrease in membership, this body reports an increase of 492. "In this," says the Conference, "we rejoice the more, because this is one of an unbroken series of increases extending over *four* years, and making in all a net gain of 3,468." This, after all, betokens a vital, healthy condition; and instead of speaking in terms of de-traction and discouragement, it were far better, and in accord with the charity that "thinketh no evil," cordially to say—God speed The Methodist New Connexion! Very able and godly ministers are to be found in its ranks. "It has already rendered important services, through both the pulpit and the press, to the cause of Christianity and of religious freedom." Only let it more earnestly utilize the many agencies for good which it possesses, let its office-bearers and members look for less of polish and more of power in the ministry; then shall its future be far brighter than the past has been.

## CHAPTER III.

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FROM 1797 TO 1828.

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PRIMITIVE METHODISM, the next of the branches, in point of time, began its career about the year 1810. Not, however, as is sometimes erroneously stated, as the result of previous agitation or secession. For, in truth, properly speaking, there was neither the one nor the other. A favoured child of Providence, this community was raised up by the great Head of the Church to perform a mighty work, especially amongst the labouring classes of our own country. In a valuable monthly publication we have met with this remarkable statement :

“From a minister of the Primitive Connexion we have received the following, which corrects a very prevalent mistake. ‘The Primitive Methodist Connexion is *not* a “secession” from the Wesleyans. Mr. H. Bourne, who is regarded as the first of its founders, was not converted to God through Methodist agency, nor was he a member of that body when he employed a missionary at his own expense to preach the Gospel to the benighted peasantry

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among the hills of Staffordshire. In this laudable effort the object was purely to convert sinners to God, and then to advise them to unite with such existing churches as might best comport with the individual views of the new converts. Neither the missionary nor his employer had the most distant idea of ever forming a separate section. To say that no members have left the Wesleyans and joined the Primitives in their onward march would be untrue; and quite as false to say that the Wesleyans have not received as much numerical strength from the labours of the Primitives. In point of its members the latter community is quite as original as the former. Has any 'secession' been known to take place without agitation? because agitation was not employed by the Primitives to obtain the removal of any real or supposed grievances, or to gain adherents before or after their formation into a separate people."

What may be termed the nucleus of this body was caused by what, in itself, at first sight, seemed trivial and unimportant. Several persons became greatly impressed in favour of a form of revivalism in America called camp-meetings, and appeared to think it might be well to attempt something in the same way, though on a smaller scale, in England. Just at this time, 1807, the Wesleyan Conference took cognizance of the movement in America, and upon the issue proceeded to action with reference to

its societies at home. Hence the extract which we take from the Minutes of that year :—

“ *Question* 20. What is the judgment of the Conference concerning what are called Camp-Meetings ?

Answer. It is our judgment, that even supposing such meetings to be allowable in America, they are highly improper in England, and likely to be productive of considerable mischief. And we discard all connection with them.”

Notwithstanding this enactment, as it may be regarded, the individuals we have before referred to pursued the even tenor of their way, holding camp-meetings on various occasions, and doubtless with blessed effect, as seen in the conversion of sinners, some of them the vilest of the vile. But such proceedings, being regarded as irregular and opposed to the opinion, if not law, of Conference, were interdicted, and could not be allowed. Still, the offenders, believing themselves to be in the path of duty, continued in their work ; reminding us of other irregulars, namely, Peter and John, who, addressing the rulers and elders of old, said :—
 “ Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.”
 The almost immediate consequence was — not secession but expulsion !

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In the life of the Rev. W. Clowes, well written by the Rev. W. Garner, who is also the author of other valuable works, we find observations interesting and appropriate.

“The chief actors,” says Mr. Garner, “in this religious movement, were not seceders from the Methodist body. They did not voluntarily withdraw from that community, although they witnessed certain things within her hierarchical pale which they did not, and could not approve. They were forcibly put out of the Church with characters unstained; and when they were so treated by the Methodist Church, they did not agitate and beat up for recruits from that society. They pursued their course in peace; they did more than this—they advised parties dissatisfied with Methodist rule to remain with that body, and counselled their own converts also to unite with them. These facts sufficiently account for the tardy progress of Primitive Methodism in its infancy.

The new religious organization, whose principal leaders were, Messrs. Hugh Bourne, James Bourne, William Clowes, and James Steel, was officially designated, ‘THE PRIMITIVE METHODIST CONNEXION.’ Unfortunately, the adoption of this denominational name or title has been the innocent occasion of no small degree of unfriendly feeling and angry controversy.

It has often been argued in a syllogistic form

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that Primitive means first, original; but that we, as a Christian Community, are not the first, or original Methodists; and, therefore, we have no logical and just claim to the title in question.

Our reply is,—First, We admit that we are not the original Methodists. There was a Methodistic party in the Church of Rome, two hundred years ago. There were Methodists at Oxford, headed by the Rev. John Wesley, about one hundred and forty years ago; and Calvinistic Methodists, raised up by the Rev. G. Whitefield, about the same date. Whereas we, as a religious people, have existed little more than half a century; we cannot, therefore, be Primitive Methodists in the order of time. But this we never professed to be. In this particular, we frankly yield to the Papal, Oxford, and Calvinistic Methodists. But, Secondly, The term Primitive does not exclusively signify first, original. It also signifies, according to the original rule, conformity to antiquity. In this sense, Malachi speaks of John the Baptist by the name of Elijah, because he should appear in the spirit and power of that great prophetic reformer. And in this sense, we presume, the founders of our community applied the term Primitive to the religious organization which they had instrumentally formed. Of their legal and moral right to do this thing we have not the shadow of a doubt. On the fifth of February, 1830, in the reign of George the Fourth, the Deed

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Poll of the body, under the name of 'THE PRIMITIVE METHODIST CONNEXION,' was enrolled in the High Court of Chancery. In the use of our legal title we have no wish to wound the feelings of any senior Methodist people. We hope, too, that they will refrain from applying to us, as a Christian body, offensive epithets which never belonged to us, although sometimes used by us, for the sake of making ourselves intelligible to ill-informed parties; and which ought among Christians and polite people to drop into oblivion. But whether this social right be conceded to us or not, let us learn to call Christian communities, as well as individuals, by their right names.

The Rev. Henry Moore, Methodist minister, is stated to have had an interview with a young preacher of the Primitive Methodist Community; and, on inquiring to what religious body he belonged, Mr. Moore received for reply, 'The *Primitive Methodists*.' 'Primitive Methodists!' exclaimed the hoary veteran, who had toiled through the greater part of a century—looking at the *youth* with one of his searching glances—'a Primitive Methodist? Pray what do you call me then?' What 'the youth' said to this we are not informed; but he might have respectfully and pertinently answered, 'Sir, I call you by your proper legal title—not a Primitive Methodist, but a Methodist.'"

Although in its "infancy" Primitive Methodism was "tardy" in its "progress," its advance-

ment in subsequent years was rapid and marvellous. If we are not mistaken, its numerical position was greater at the end of fifty years after the commencement of its existence, than was that of the Wesleyan societies at the end of the same period. At the present time the number of its members is larger than that of all the branches put together. The record of the printed Minutes of Conference for last year, that of 1879, is as follows :—Circuits or Stations, 577. Travelling Preachers, 1,138. Local Preachers, 15,634. Class Leaders, 10,454. Members of Society, 182,877\* Sabbath Schools, 4,022, Teachers, 58,275, Scholars, 365,004. In adoring gratitude and wonder, it may well be exclaimed—"What hath God wrought !"

About the year ~~1816~~, a large secession of office-bearers and members took place in Ireland. And again the Sacrament question became the bone of contention ; but now, on the part of the complainants, in a course directly the opposite to that it had at first taken. Many years before, the English Methodists had demanded that the ordinance of the Lord's Supper should be given to them by their own ministers ; now, the Irish Methodists insisted that this ordinance should *not* be administered by their own preachers to them. They seemed to have had something like a superstitious, blind, bigoted attachment to the Established Church.

\* In addition, the churches in Canada, number 8,307 members.

The matter which had long since been settled in England, was one that gave them little or no concern. They were content to go on as they had done from the beginning. It was Mr. Wesley's plan, and there must be neither innovation nor change. At length, however, as was sure to be the case, this vexed question occupied a prominent position, and was agitated and discussed with the ardour and determination peculiar to the Irish people. The issue of the conflict was trouble and loss to the various societies. An address of the Irish Conference to the British Conference of 1816, held in London, contains the following paragraph : " With deep concern we have to deplore our want of usual success. This, we believe, must be principally attributed to the uneasy state of the minds of our people, occasioned by their different views respecting the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper being administered by our own Preachers. This question has occupied the minds of our people, and of numbers that attend on our ministry. They have debated the matter at large, and sometimes with too much warmth ; feelings unfavourable to religion have been excited ; the minds of many have been distracted with controversy ; and we fear the Spirit of God has been grieved. Meantime, we have to sustain considerable pecuniary embarrassment."

To this, the answer of the Conference was as

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follows :—"We have reason to bless God, that on this subject disputes have long since ceased in England ; and we are happy to say, that pure and undefiled religion never flourished more, both among the Preachers and the people, than since we had the ordinances among ourselves. To God be all the glory."

In an address to the Conference of 1817, are these words :—"In the order of a mysterious, yet adorable Providence, we have, dear Fathers and Brethren, been called to 'endure a great fight of afflictions.' Twenty-six of our Chapels were shut against us ; our characters were maligned, and (for no other reason, than because we granted the administration of the Christian Sacraments by our own Preachers to a large number of our people, who had long petitioned for them), we were represented as unfriendly to the excellent constitution of the Empire in Church and State. And, what we deplore more than anything else, many of our dear people, the seals of our ministry in the Lord, have been unhappily induced to decline, for the present, any further connection with us."

The loss of members numbered thousands, some have said to the extent of almost half of the Connexion. This, however, is hardly correct. In the printed Minutes, now before us, we find the following figures : Total number of members in 1816, 28,542 ; decrease, 815. The decrease in

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1817, was 7,511; in 1818, 1,979. But in 1819, there was an increase of 3,528. The seceders were designated “Primitiye Wesleyans,” and existed as a separate community until within the last two years, when they became united with the parent body. This union, it may be confidently expected, will add to the strength and usefulness of Methodism in the “sister kingdom.”

During the next few years several other divisions occurred in various parts of England and America; but as they were chiefly local, and of minor importance, it is not requisite to give them particular attention.

We now pass on to the year 1827, in which we shall meet with what has been termed the ‘LEEDS ORGAN QUESTION.’ Psalmody, or the service of song, is a very important part in the public worship of Almighty God, and should be rendered in the best manner possible. When chanting the high praises of our Heavenly King, sweet, harmonious singing in the Sanctuary, is well calculated to inspire the hearts and thrill the souls of all true worshippers. For vocal music Methodists have always been famous, and in this art, if equalled, they have never been surpassed. Not but what this rule will admit of exceptions, even in the present day; reminding us, in some instances we have witnessed, of the forcible words of a late reverend and venerable



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Doctor, who was accustomed to say things plain and original. On one occasion, turning round in the pulpit to the choir, whose singing, no doubt, was very much out of tune, he exclaimed: "It's a wonder the angels in heaven don't come down and twist your necks off!" In the early years of Methodism instrumental music was not allowed. Mr. Wesley was once asked if he had any objection to instruments of music in the house of God? He answered, "No; provided they can neither be *seen* nor *heard*." It is interesting, if not amusing, to become acquainted with some of this good man's views on the subject of music and singing. In one place in his Journals, he says: "I was much surprised in reading an 'Essay on Music,' wrote by one who is a thorough master of the subject, to find that the music of the ancients was as simple as that of the Methodists; that their music wholly consisted of melody, or the arrangement of single notes; that what is now called harmony, singing in parts, the whole of counterpoint and fugues, is quite novel, being never known in the world till the popedom of Leo X." He further observes: "That as the singing of different words by different persons at the very same time, necessarily prevents attention to the sense, so it frequently destroys melody for the sake of harmony; meantime it destroys the very end of music, which is to affect the passions." Again, he says: "I came (to Warrington) just in

time to put a stop to a bad custom, which was creeping in here ; a few men, who had fine voices, sang a psalm which no one knew, in a tune fit for an opera, wherein three, four, or five persons sung different words at the same time ! What an insult upon common sense ! What a burlesque upon public worship ! No custom can excuse such a mixture of profaneness and absurdity.”

Once more he writes : “ That this part of divine worship may be more acceptable to God, as well as more profitable to yourselves and others, be careful to observe the following directions :—

1. Sing *all*. See that you join with the congregation as frequently as you can. Let not a slight degree of weakness or weariness hinder you. If it is a cross to you, take it up, and you will find a blessing.

2. Sing *lustily*, and with good courage. Beware of singing as if you were half dead or half asleep ; but lift up your voice with strength. Be no more afraid of your voice now, nor more ashamed of its being heard, than when you sung the songs of Satan.

3. Sing *modestly*. Do not bawl, so as to be heard above, or distinct from, the rest of the congregation, that you may not destroy the harmony ; but strive to unite your voices together, so as to make one clear melodious sound.

4. Sing *in time*. Whatever time is sung, be sure to keep with it. Do not run before, nor stay behind

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it; but attend closely to the leading voices, and move therewith as exactly as you can. And take care you sing not too slow. This drawling way naturally steals on all who are lazy; and it is high time to drive it out from among us, and sing all our tunes just as quick as we did at first.

5. Above all, sing *spiritually*. Have an eye to God in every word you sing. Aim at pleasing Him more than yourself, or any other creature. In order to this, attend strictly to the sense of what you sing; and see that your heart is not carried away with the sound, but offered to God continually; so shall your singing be such as the Lord will approve of here, and reward when He cometh in the clouds of Heaven."

After the writer of the above extracts had passed away, instruments of music—such as the violin, fiddle, flute, and others—for which we cannot just now find a name—were both "*seen*" and "*heard*" in many Methodist chapels, as well as other preaching places. That they have been any improvement, either in their appearance or effect, to congregational singing, may be justly doubted. They are now, however, mostly superseded by an instrument certainly far less objectionable—if at all—namely, the grand OLD ORGAN. We say old, because the word organ is to be found in several places in the oldest and best of books—the Bible. See Gen. iv. 21, also Psalm cl. 4.

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It is not unlikely the reader may be curious to know the name of the *first* Methodist Chapel in which an organ was placed. The information is supplied in a letter, written by the late Dr. Adam Clarke, dated February 5th, 1828, and addressed to the late Daniel Isaac, who then travelled in Leeds:—"You have a blessed work, and shall *doubtful disputations* and *ungodly music* be permitted to destroy all this? Yes, if God lay not to His hand, and give us wisdom for folly, we ourselves will do what the devil and the world could not effect. You and I had the honour of being numbered with the 75 Preachers, who wrote and signed our protest against the first organ, which the eloquence of Mr. Bunting got set up in Brunswick Chapel, Liverpool, and which, to my own knowledge, has been an unmixed curse to that Chapel, and I doubt to the society in general. God bless you. Yours affectionately, A. CLARKE."

Strong language this, but quite characteristic of the "learned commentator;" and, there is reason to believe, it would find an echo in the minds and hearts of the Leeds Methodists of *those* days.

We shall now proceed to detail the particulars of an event, which resulted in the formation of another branch of the great Wesleyan family.

Yorkshire used to be designated the "garden, the hot-bed of Methodism." This designation *was*

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especially applicable to Leeds. One day as Mr. Wesley and some of his followers were walking along one of its streets, called, Briggate, one of the bystanders, addressing his companions, said—“There goes Wesley and his crew!” Turning on his heel, the good man pleasantly rejoined—“Nay, my friend, not by fifty thousand.” Of this number the societies in the Leeds Circuit furnished a large proportion. This town contained one memorable place of worship, called, the “OLD CHAPEL;” in which Wesley himself frequently preached; and which was, indeed, a grand centre of spiritual influence and power. In the beginning of the present century the services in this chapel were held at seven o’clock on a Sabbath morning, and half-past five in the evening. This was done to meet the views and wishes of the older members, who had been accustomed to the “old plan,” of not worshipping in their own places during “Church hours.” Soon, however, a change became expedient; also, an increase of chapel accommodation. Hence, in the year 1802, another commodious sanctuary was erected, called, “ALBION STREET CHAPEL.” This met the requirements of those who *had no* conscientious scruples concerning Church hours, nor any very great affection for the Establishment; and henceforth, the times of public worship became the ordinary hours of half-past ten, and six o’clock. About the year 1818, a still more

spacious erection took place, named "WESLEY CHAPEL." This, also, was soon filled; and as the congregations, together with the demand for fresh sittings, constantly increased, a fourth, and yet larger Chapel, seemed an indispensable necessity. Accordingly it was resolved to build one that would seat two thousand persons. God honoured the faith and zeal of His servants, the great undertaking was accomplished, and in the year 1824 "BRUNSWICK CHAPEL" was opened.

This "tabernacle of the Most High," was "Beautiful for situation"—we had almost said—"the joy of the whole earth!"

One reason why the writer is so emphatic in his praise, is, because of the personal regard he has, and must continue to have, for the place itself. There, in early life, he was born for glory! There, his sainted parents, for many years office-bearers, (leaders) had a family pew; and in the ground adjoining a "family grave." The kind and sympathetic reader will pardon this reference; we felt as if we could hardly avoid making it. But, apart from what we have just mentioned, we should still have been inclined to look upon the building in question as a model Methodist Chapel. Talk of your modern "Steeple house" Chapels, your temples of "Gothic Architecture," they will bear no comparison to this! For chaste design, excellent appearance, acoustic purposes, and comfort to the as-

sembled worshippers—in our opinion, and that of thousands more, it surpasses them all. And yet, strange as it may appear, it was imagined that something else was wanting to give finish, completeness, even to this beautiful house of prayer. It soon attracted the attention, and was frequented by a class of persons, who had not been accustomed to sit in any chapel, connected with the Wesleyan body. The congregation became very large, as well as “highly respectable;” an organ seemed a most desirable improvement; the magnificent achievement would hardly be perfect without it. So, at least, thought “a few of the Trustees;” and expressed their wishes accordingly.

To this no reasonable objection could be taken. Considered in itself it was quite allowable. At the same time, however, it must be remembered there were two parties to this question; how then shall the matter be decided? Why, clearly, in the way that all questions, on which there is a difference of opinion, are generally settled; namely, by the majority of the votes, on either side, of those who are concerned in the business. We shall see how far this principle was recognised and acted upon in the instance before us. When the subject was first introduced at a Leaders’ meeting, the superintendent, Rev. Thomas Stanley, assured the meeting that with reference to the organ project, “the rules and usages of Methodism required the consent of

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the leaders to such a measure, and that without such concurrence the Conference would not listen to an application from any quarter whatever." At a subsequent meeting, therefore, a formal request from some of the trustees, and those who acted with them, was presented and received. "On the same evening the following petition, signed by sixty local preachers, was announced to the Leaders' meeting, requesting them to refuse their sanction to this measure, but which, at the suggestion of Mr. Stanley, was not read." As it is a very interesting document it may be read here.

"We, the undersigned local preachers, beg respectfully to lay before the Leaders of the Leeds East Circuit (in meeting assembled), our sentiments on the subject of an organ in Brunswick Chapel. United with our brethren, the leaders, in one common object, the glory of God in the salvation of sinners, and in the building up of His church, we naturally feel interested in everything relating to Methodism, and are anxious to see such measures adopted throughout our system and economy, as will best produce so great and important a design.

But, brethren, we cannot but feel ashamed at the attempts which we understand are now making, to change the mode of conducting the devotional part of our religious services, by erecting an organ in Brunswick Chapel: a measure, which, whilst it destroys at once, the excellent form

of our venerable founder, is one, which, almost universal experience goes to prove, to be at variance with, and subversive of, that spirituality in our congregational worship, which has so long characterized the Methodists of Leeds, and which we believe to be so acceptable in the sight of God.

The Leeds society has hitherto set a noble example to the whole Connexion, for its steady and uniform adherence to the original and simple forms of religious worship; and, we fear, brethren, that the wish for such innovation as that now contemplated, proceeds not so much from a desire to increase holy and hallowing influence upon the hearts and lives of the congregation, as to please the ear and captivate the passions, and ought, in our humble opinion, to be regarded, not only as an approximation to the spirit of the world, but also as the first step towards other and still more important changes. If the friends of such a measure seek only to increase spirituality of worship, which surely ought to be the end and design of every change, it appears to us, that such an object would be best promoted by their habitual search after greater personal enjoyment of its power and influence, and then from their hearts would they be enabled to ‘make melody unto God.’

We would seriously recommend to the solemn and attentive consideration of the friends of organs, what account can be given at the final day of retri-

bution, for the expenditure of so large a sum of money as would be necessary, for a purpose which we have every reason to believe would prove an actual evil ; especially at a period like the present, when members of our society are wanting the common necessities of life.

In conclusion, brethren, we believe and trust, that a matter so fraught with such serious consequences to vital religion among us, as that upon which we now address you, will not receive that sanction from you, which by the laws of Methodism is indispensable for its adoption.

Praying that the God whom we serve in the Gospel of His Son, may give you guidance and direction in all things, and on this important subject in particular,

We are, dear brethren,

Yours in the bonds of affection."

Amongst the names appended are Messrs. James Musgrave, Thomas Simpson, John Lawson, James Sigston, Matthew Johnson, John Yewdall, Benjamin R. Vickers, Charles Smith, Henry Spink, William Whitely, Edward Phillips, William Rinder, W. D. Boothman, William Scarlett. All these were well known by the writer of this history, in his youth, and beloved as faithful, useful office-bearers. Only one survives !

After full discussion the application or request

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was negatived by an overwhelming majority of sixty—to one !

A publication we have in our possession supplies additional information. “The Leaders were *the proper representatives of the Society*, and according to the law of Methodism their votes should have decided the business. The Trustees, however, disdaining their authority, appealed to the regular District Meeting of Travelling Preachers. Here, again, the Trustees were defeated by a majority of thirteen against seven. Mortified by these repeated failures, some of the Trustees suggested to the Preachers of the District, to refer the matter to the Conference ; but the proposal was instantly rejected, as inconsistent with the rules of the Connexion. Here, then, we say, in the name of the God of peace, and by virtue of the laws of Methodism, the matter ought to have ended ; and it is those who, under the influence of improper motives, violated these laws, and sacrificed the peace of the Society, that are alone to be blamed for the consequences which have resulted from their unwarrantable conduct. Determined on carrying their point, the Trustees consulted several of the Preachers, among whom were Mr. Stephens, then Superintendent of the London East Circuit, and Mr. Watson, President of the Conference ; they both gave their opinion, that the Leaders’ Meeting had nothing at all to do with the question. The Trustees were therefore

perfectly satisfied that the decision of the Conference would be in favour of the Organ ; and as early as the month of February, 1827, they began to solicit subscriptions. On Tuesday, the 31st of July, intimation was given in Leeds, of a Committee having been appointed by the Conference, *to hear the statement of those Trustees who were favourable to the measure.* On receiving this intelligence, the Local Preachers (at the suggestion of the Rev. George Marsden it is said), called a meeting on the ensuing Friday evening, to express their views and feelings on the subject. Mr. Walmsley, the second preacher on the Circuit, who had now returned from Conference on account of his health, was invited to preside at this meeting, but he declined to do so ; in consequence of which, Mr. Thomas Simpson was called to the chair. Although only a few hours' notice was given of this meeting, it was attended by forty local preachers, thirty-six of whom voted for the resolutions, by which it was determined that an address, which was then read, should be forthwith transmitted to the Conference, then sitting ; and that Messrs. Thomas Simpson and Matthew Johnson, should form the deputation for its conveyance and delivery." Without delay, these gentlemen proceeded to Manchester, where the Conference of that year was held. In Committee, appointed by that assembly to meet the deputation, " Mr. Simpson stated, in very pointed

and energetic terms what the society felt in reference to the proposed organ; earnestly beseeching the Committee, and through them the Conference, not to sanction its introduction, in the face of such a powerful opposition."

But all objections, if not answered, were overruled; and the Conference, in its wisdom or otherwise, prompted, it was declared, by the resolute will of the Rev. J. Bunting, at length decided, that the permission, which the Trustees had so persistently sued for, should be granted. It is only just to the memory of those who deprecated this decision to supply the following statement:—

"There is one subject upon which those who were driven from the Old Connexion on this occasion, have ever had cause of complaint against writers on the Conference side, and it is this; that they are represented as leaving the Society *merely because an organ was put into Brunswick Chapel*. It has been said by a celebrated writer, that if a report, however untrue, be allowed to circulate uncontradicted for twelve months, the probability is that it will become fixed in the public mind as an established fact; and although no such length of time as that had been suffered to elapse in repelling the assertion in question wherever the opportunity offered, yet as the occasions for doing so have necessarily been exceedingly limited as compared with the great extent of the Conference Connexion,

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it is probable enough that the generally received opinion upon this matter is, that which has now been stated. With considerable resemblance to truth, this assertion contains the grossest error, and, in fact, is calculated only to mislead. It is very doubtful if the mere erection of that instrument in the chapel would have caused the defection of a single member from the Society, for although a strong feeling doubtless existed against the novelty, yet had no rule been violated by its introduction, and the requirements of the Conference been honourably observed, the advocates of the organ, there can be no reason to doubt, might have been fully gratified. IT WAS NOT, it is again repeated, because an organ was placed in Brunswick Chapel. Let that fact be borne in mind by all who wish to understand the real circumstances of that affair. In any future history of Methodism, which may record the important transactions now under review, the case, as it now stands before us, must be clearly and distinctly stated, or it will not be a true and faithful history of one of the most important periods in the annals of the Methodist body."

It is recorded that the organ cost a thousand guineas, or more, but this was followed by the loss of more than a thousand members, in Leeds alone. Disaffection, or sympathy, spread to other parts of the Connexion. In York, Whitby, Keighley, Barnsley, Sheffield, Manchester, Preston, Bristol, London,

and other places, separate societies were formed, growing ultimately into a distinct section, known as the "WESLEYAN PROTESTANT METHODISTS." One of its members, a plain, good man, was once asked, "Why do you call yourselves Protestant Methodists?" The answer was, "Because we protest against t'oud body." An American divine has remarked, that "some people are accustomed to tell us there is no mention of Protestants in the Bible, but the 'two witnesses' spoken of in the book of Revelation were Protestants. The word translated 'witness' is the same as the Latin word from which Protestant is taken; and we, as Protestants, should take the position of the two witnesses in testifying to the truth."

The Protestant Methodists existed as a useful, laborious church, with varying degrees of success, for about ~~eight~~ years; and were then united to a still larger community, the origin of which will be considered in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV.

FROM 1828 TO 1835.

IN the beginning, Methodism did not possess what is sometimes termed, in a literary sense, an educated ministry. It is true, the Founder himself was an exception to this. He was a man of finished education, of varied and extensive learning, as his published works abundantly testify. In this respect, however, he stood as it were alone. The early Methodist Preachers were godly, earnest, soul-saving men, but to culture or refinement, as then, and now, understood, they made no pretensions. On this account their enemies, especially the clergy of those days, reproached and persecuted them. They were denounced as ignorant, unlearned men, taken from the lowest grades of society. Having never been at Oxford or Cambridge how dare they to take upon themselves the sacred functions of the Christian ministry? which belonged only to those who had been ordained and set apart for the work. Why, they were nearly as bad as "Korah, Dathan, and Abiram!" In face

of such formidable indictments the accused stood unappalled. If they possessed not those secondary qualifications, they had what were prior and far more essential, because religious and spiritual. When put upon the defensive, they were able, in the fear of God, to speak for themselves. In these days, when there is none too little of priestly arrogance, it is refreshing to hear what one of them said in his own behalf, and on behalf of those who laboured with him in the word and doctrine.

“It is objected that ‘these preachers have not had a regular classical education.’ I answer, *education* is a very good thing, and a *classical* education is not held in contempt by the Methodists. But it is not a thing indispensably necessary to a proper discharge of the work of the ministry. Such an education may be convenient, at any rate, ornamental. But a man of only a common education, may learn and teach all that is necessary to salvation. What knowledge is necessary on the subject of religion which cannot be found in English authors? Nay, what knowledge have ninety-nine out of a hundred of these clergymen, in matters of religion, but what might have been obtained, and even in greater perfection, from authors whose works are published in the English language? Is *shadow* to supersede, and triumph over substance? A diligent perusal of

those books, would be much more likely to prepare a man for the Christian ministry, than reading what are commonly termed *the classics*. A surprising circumstance, indeed, that a man should be thought not sufficiently instructed to preach the glorious Gospel of peace, without being sent to the polluted, heathenish schools of Greece and Rome, to have his judgment perverted, and the bias of his soul directed to, and influenced with a thirst after the desire of the eye, the desire of the flesh, and the pride of life; to be brought to admire, and almost adore, what is earthly, sensual, and devilish; to have his imagination fired, almost beyond all bounds, with ideas of lust and debauchery, war and slaughter, robbery and devastation!

Whatever may be said about the *absolute necessity* of the laying on of hands, at appointments to the Gospel ministry, I feel no inclination to dispute the *propriety* of it. A number of us have received this from men whom *we* think as much authorised to confer ordination as any Bishop in Christendom. And should the Conference so determine, it may easily be imparted to all the preachers upon their being received into full connexion. It will be found a much easier task to put hands *upon* a man's head, than to put mental qualifications *into* it. And it is to be feared, that 'mitred heads' sometimes lay 'hands on skulls that cannot teach, and will not learn.' Nor is this

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defect confined to Episcopalians, as the following anecdote seems to intimate. At a certain ordination in Scotland, when the time came for putting hands upon the candidate's head, one minister was observed to keep his distance, and stretching out his hand, laid the end of his stick upon the young minister's head. Being afterwards spoken to upon this strange act, he pleasantly observed, 'He thought timber to timber formed a very proper union.'

Am I then arguing against learning? No! I allow its proper worth; but I am arguing against what I call, *the* **POPERY** of *learning*. Learning in itself is not an evil. But when, under pretence of it, a sort of literary popery is attempted to be established, and men in square caps and other antiquated habiliments, would seize the imaginary keys of the pretended successor of St. Peter, common sense, and indignation against imposition, in whatever shape it may come, impel me to enter my protest.

I am satisfied, there are many clergymen belonging to the Church, of good natural parts, of useful, as well as ornamental learning, and a goodly and increasing number, who have both the form and the power of godliness. And exceedingly glad should I be, were I able to say this touching the whole of them."

He who wrote what has just been quoted, and others, by dint of perseverance in the use of all

available means, made considerable progress in the various branches of useful knowledge ; and would have compared very favourably with those who had the benefit of greater advantages. Still, it was ere long felt that a regular and more systematic course of training was needed.

As time went on this necessity, it was thought, became more and more apparent. The society and congregations were progressing in respectability and educational attainments ; the pulpit must not be behind the pew, rather, in advance of it. Objections and difficulties were presented, but they were overcome ; and at length it was resolved by the Conference of 1834, that a “ WESLEYAN THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTION,” should be established. A committee was also appointed to arrange for the occupation of suitable premises. The resolution it must be stated was not unanimous. “ The speakers in favour of the project were, Messrs. Bunting, Reece, Gaulter, Sutcliffe, Scott, Lessey and Newton. It was opposed by Messrs. Wood (father of the Conference), Dr. Warren, Bromley, and Moore. When the House divided there appeared for it about 150 ; against it, 31 ; and about 100 remained neuter.”

We are inclined to think the decision was expedient and wise. In the works of the late gifted Robert Hall are the following remarks :—“ There was a time, we are aware, when doubts were entertained, in some serious minds, of the eligibility of

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training young men for the ministry, by a preparatory course of study. These scruples, we believe, have long since subsided, and a conviction is felt by intelligent men of all denominations, of the expedience, if not necessity, of instructing candidates for the ministry in the principles of science and literature. Learning is no longer dreaded as the enemy of piety ; nor is it supposed that the orthodoxy of a public teacher of religion derives any security from his professed ignorance on every other subject. Along with this revolution in the sentiments of a certain class of Christians, circumstances have arisen, connected with the more general diffusion of knowledge and the state of society, which render a higher degree of mental cultivation than was heretofore needed, indispensably requisite."

Dr. Warren, a minister of more than thirty years' standing, was leader of the opposition. It was alleged, we remember, that the principal cause of his opposition was, "disappointed ambition," and because he was not appointed to be one of the officers of the Institution. This was neither fair nor true. It has been already seen that he opposed the project before the resolution for its establishment had been carried, when the officers had not been officially nominated. In reference to this very subject he said—"Is not the silly calumny, communicated to me by the *credulous* Secretary (Mr.

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Newton), now fully refuted? My opposition the fruit of my exclusion from office? Absurd! Did not I vote for Mr. Bunting—and (without wishing to see whether I was one of the elect) instantly nominate two of the most respectable of my brethren, for the remaining offices?—to say nothing of the incongruity of the thing,—that at my age, and with my habits of life, the situation of *Schoolmaster*, or of a *House Steward*, under *such* a President (Bunting), could ever be an object of my ambition!” Soon after the Conference, the Doctor published a pamphlet on the whole question; for doing this he was summoned to take his trial at a “Special District Meeting.” As this meeting was followed by such grave, it may be added sad consequences, we shall give a particular account of its proceedings.

“After the meeting had been opened in the usual manner, Mr. Newton requested, on behalf of a brother (the Rev. G. B. M'Donald), who happened to be in the town, permission to attend the sittings of the District. This being immediately granted, Dr. Warren proposed, that the same indulgence should be allowed to another brother, a friend of his, who was present at the last Conference, and who was also now in Manchester. This likewise was agreed to, and the Rev. James Bromley then entered the room, made his obeisance to the Chair, and seated himself to the left of his friend Dr.

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Warren. The Rev. E. Grindrod here rose, and objected to Mr. Bromley's appearance in that meeting, as a witness or counsel for Dr. Warren. It was then required, as the condition of his remaining in the room, that he should neither take any notes of the proceedings, nor be permitted to speak on the case. To these hard terms the Doctor consented.

The following charges, preferred against Dr. Warren, were then recited:—

1. That Dr. Warren, by the publication of his pamphlet, entitled 'Remarks on the Wesleyan Theological Institution for the Improvement of the Junior Preachers,' has violated the essential principles of our Connexion.

2. That the said pamphlet contains sundry incorrect statements and misrepresentations of facts, highly prejudicial to the general character of the body.

3. That the pamphlet contains also certain calumnious and unfounded reflections upon the character and proceedings of the Conference, and on the motives and conduct of individual preachers.

4. That the said pamphlet is distinguished by a spirit of resentment and uncharitableness highly unbecoming the character of a Christian minister, and obviously tending to produce strife and division in our societies.

Official Notice forwarding the Charges :—

‘DEAR DOCTOR,—The enclosed charges having been preferred against you by the Rev. John Anderson, it is my duty to give you notice to attend a Special District Meeting, to answer to the said charges. The meeting is appointed for Wednesday, the 22nd, to commence at ten o’clock in the morning, in the Steward’s Room, Oldham-street. I have requested the President of the Conference to preside on the occasion.

I am yours faithfully,

ROBERT NEWTON.

Manchester, October 11, 1834.’

The Minutes of the Conference relative to the Wesleyan Theological Institution were read over.

The President, Rev. Joseph Taylor, begged, at the outset, that he might be left out of the question, as to any imputations in the pamphlet that might be thought to have a reference to himself.

The whole of Dr. Warren’s pamphlet was then read by the Secretary, Mr. Crowther, after which it was left with Dr. Warren to choose whether he would plead to the charges collectively, or put in a distinct answer to each of them separately. Before giving a reply, the Doctor, in a whisper to Mr. Bromley, asked him whether he thought, with him, that it would be better to have them all gone

through first; to which he assented. Mr. Grindrod observing the Doctor whispering to Mr. Bromley, rose, and with great warmth, protested against this act on the part of Dr. Warren, and appealed to the decision of the meeting, that Mr. Bromley should not be allowed to be present there as Dr. Warren's counsel. The Doctor replied, that he certainly did not consider himself as at all employing his friend in that capacity, by merely whispering a word to him, as he might have done to any other brother; that he understood the determination to which the meeting had come, to mean, of course, that Mr. Bromley should not be permitted to plead in his favour, but that, if the meeting required it, he would even consent to be deprived of his friend's assistance in any shape, and said, 'To prevent the possibility of anything offensive to the brethren, Mr. Bromley might remove to some other part of the room.' Mr. Bromley accordingly quitted Dr. Warren's side, and requested one of the brethren to sit on a little further, that he might place himself next to Mr. Grindrod; when Mr. Grindrod, with savage, and almost fiendlike look and tone, cried out, 'No! you shall not sit by *me*.' Mr. Bromley, unable altogether to suppress his feelings of indignation, whispered to the brother by whose side he then sat down, 'This is consummate cruelty!' Mr. Anderson, having overheard this private remark, loudly, and with the utmost heat, declared, that Mr.

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Bromley had declared the meeting consummately cruel; had abused the courtesy by which he had been allowed to sit there; that it would be impossible in this manner to go on with the business of the meeting, and that he should therefore move that Messrs. Bromley and M'Donald be requested to withdraw. Mr. Newton seemed at first averse to the motion, but on its being seconded, and resolutely urged by Mr. Grindrod, he at length acquiesced. Before, however, the motion was put, Dr. Warren rose, and in the most impressive language, reviewed the conduct of the brethren towards him in these particulars. He had consented to every proposition, which went in the most cruel and arbitrary manner to deprive him of the assistance of his friend, Mr. Bromley; but of his presence in the meeting he would not be deprived. They had already agreed to his introduction: he had done nothing whilst amongst them that deserved his expulsion. If, therefore, after having made so many concessions that would never have been required from any one at any other bar, they persisted in their determination, and compelled Mr. Bromley to retire, he solemnly assured them, that he would no longer stay in that meeting, or stand any trial before them, come what might! Notwithstanding this declaration on the part of Dr. Warren, grounded on the above reasons, the motion, after some further remarks, was submitted, and carried by a

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small majority. An accommodation was then proposed. The Doctor was asked whether he would consent to stand his trial at an adjourned District Meeting, that might be called to deliberate upon his case. He was urged to give an immediate answer, but declined doing so. It was finally agreed that he should give an answer at three o'clock in the afternoon. This was about one o'clock, the whole morning having been spent in the manner described. The following is a copy of the reply which Dr. Warren sent in writing at the time appointed:—

‘Oldham-street, Oct. 22, 1834.

DEAR SIR,—After mature deliberation, under existing circumstances, I have come to this final conclusion—that I do not think it my duty to attend any future session of the Special District Meeting, called on my case. When you shall have come to your ultimate resolution, be pleased to send it to me in writing to my house.

I am, dear sir, yours most respectfully,

SAMUEL WARREN.

Rev. J. Taylor, President
of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference.’

Notwithstanding this refusal the meeting continued its deliberations until nine o'clock at night. The next morning a deputation, consisting of

Messrs. Newton, Hanwell, and Crowther, waited upon Dr. Warren, to inquire whether after a night's repose and re-consideration, he still persisted in the determination expressed in his note to the chairman. Finding it was so, they returned to the meeting, which resumed its discussion of the case. About four o'clock in the afternoon the business was concluded, after which the following resolutions were sent officially to the accused :—

1. That Dr. Warren, by his positive and repeated refusal to take his trial at this District Meeting, has left to the meeting, however reluctant thus to proceed, no alternative, consistent with the existing laws and usages of the body, but that of declaring him to be suspended from his office as a Travelling Preacher, and he is hereby suspended accordingly.

2. That, nevertheless, if within a month from the date of these resolutions, Dr. Warren shall signify to the chairman of this District, his willingness to take his trial before a Special District Meeting, on the charges of which he has received regular and formal notice ; the sentence of suspension shall be removed on the assembling of that meeting, and he shall be allowed to have his trial, without any bar or disadvantage, on account of his present refusal 'to attend any future session' of this District Meeting.

3. That in case of Dr. Warren's declining to

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give the required notice to the chairman of the District, within the period above specified, he shall be considered as being suspended until the next Conference."

The decisions at which the District Meeting had thus arrived, were strenuously resisted by the Doctor himself, and likewise by not a few of the official members of the Circuit in which he then resided. Hence the following propositions, amongst others, passed at the Quarterly Meeting:—

"1st. That this meeting continues to acknowledge the Rev. Dr. Warren as the only lawful Superintendent of the Manchester First Circuit; and that the attempt lately made to set aside his authority, and suspend his spiritual ministrations, by the decision of a Special District Meeting, is disgraceful to their character as Christian ministers, unrighteous in the sight of God, and contrary to the legitimate exercise of the power vested in them by the Conference.

2nd. That the thanks of this meeting be given to the Rev. Samuel Warren, LL.D., for his able and impartial conduct in the chair; also to the Rev. Philip Garrett, of Rochdale, and to the Rev. Joshua Marsden, of Sheerness, for similar conduct at their respective Quarterly Meetings."

Other Circuits in various parts of the Connexion, took prompt and resolute action in opposition against one party, and sympathy with the other.

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This was the case, not only after, but in some instances before, the suspension had taken place. The subjoined address may be regarded as a specimen of the rest :—

“To the Rev. Samuel Warren, LL.D.

We, the undersigned, being Trustees, Stewards, Local Preachers, and Leaders of the Liverpool South Circuit, highly approving of your remarks on the Wesleyan Theological Institution, and on the proceedings in committee which preceded its adoption by the Conference, have thought that it is due to you as well as to themselves, to express a sense of their grateful acknowledgment, upon seeing your views upon that subject published to the world, in the form in which it now appears before it. We believe the stand you have taken deserves the most unlimited support of all the real friends of Methodism; and we doubt not that the honest and unqualified avowal of your sentiments in opposing the dominating influence of an aspiring party, will be hailed by thousands, as the dawn of a joyful day of Christian liberty and freedom.

We rank among the number of those who feel the strongest aversion, to submit to irresponsible authority, and we have groaned under the depressing load of long accumulated grievances, which are now rendered nearly insupportable. We will not say that we have willingly submitted to it,

although we have borne it patiently ; we have mourned over our state 'in secret places,' and our hearts have been filled with pain upon finding ourselves shorn of strength in the presence of an uncontrollable power, which imposed involuntary submission upon us ; nevertheless, though cast down, we are not in despair ; we have, if it were only faintly, anticipated some event that would throw over Methodism a new and a more cheering aspect ; we think that period has now arrived, and we trust that you are the chosen instrument in the hands of Providence, who will roll back the fearful torrent which threatens to sweep us away from the position to which, under God, we were raised up, and in which Mr. Wesley left us.

We have contemplated the erection of a Collegiate Institution among us with fearful forebodings ; we saw that the spiritual interests of Methodism were placed in imminent danger, inasmuch as we feared it would lead to an abandonment of the leadings of Divine Providence (under which we have so greatly prospered) for a doubtful and untried experiment ; which, if unsanctioned by the Divine blessing, might cause 'the glory to depart from us.' We carefully endeavoured to ascertain the finger of God in this matter, but we saw no indication of the Divine direction or approval. We consulted the Oracle, but the voice said, 'Stand in the ways, and inquire for the old paths, and

walk therein.' We tremble for the ark lest it should be touched with unholy hands; we grew faint lest the beautiful places of Zion should become waste, and her walls be thrown down.

We decidedly object to the mode of legislation which has prematurely resolved to carry the Institution into immediate operation, in utter disregard of the recognised laws of the Connexion which authorise the Quarterly Meetings to signify their assent or dissent to any new law previous to its final adoption; and which in this case has been notoriously dispensed with, so that any legal expression from the people in its favour has not been sought or obtained. We have now no other alternative left us, but to urge our opposition in accordance with your views on every proper and fitting occasion; and if the regular avenue of remonstrance is closed against us, we shall then have just ground to adopt ulterior measures, and at once bring the matter before the public at large.

We have heard with painful emotion, that it has been determined to call you to the bar of a District Meeting on the 22nd instant. Such a proceeding, if carried into effect, we shall denounce as being of a most reckless and unjustifiable character, because the honourable and manly course which you pursued was the only means left you to vindicate yourself under the insinuations that attached an 'unprincipled' and 'unhallowed' motive to the


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objections which you firmly maintained against unconstitutional power, which was sought to be grafted upon the Institution now sanctioned by Conference law.

We, therefore, after due deliberation upon the justice of your claims to be supported under the arduous conflict, that we earnestly trust will be maintained to preserve and consolidate our liberties on a broad and permanent foundation, *do hereby pledge ourselves*, to a constant and unwavering determination, to hold up your hands by giving you the best support that our united energies can devise, in order to secure to ourselves and our children the great principles of our religious liberties, which, as our dearest birthright, we dare not relinquish, but are resolved to hand it down to the latest generations, unmutilated by the iron hand of power, or unsullied by a mean compliance with the selfish interests of a false and compromising expediency.

Signed by twenty-seven persons, holding office as Trustees, Stewards, Local Preachers, and Leaders.

Liverpool, October 17, 1834."

The next step on the part of the suspended was an appeal to a civil court, the Court of Chancery; an act we must not attempt to justify on New Testament principles. For this the Conference condemned the Doctor; though it is said that, in

several instances, they followed his example. This, to say the least of it, was not very consistent. After Counsel had been heard at great length on both sides, the Vice-Chancellor decided against the Plaintiff, and in favour of the Defendants. After this, Dr. Warren made what may be termed his final appeal to the Methodist people at large; asking for a still further manifestation of their sympathy and help. And certainly the appeal was very extensively, as well as generously, responded to. A "Grand Central Association" was formed, having its head-quarters in Manchester, and holding communication with other parts of the Connexion. Numerous, excited, and enthusiastic meetings were held; in which it was made abundantly manifest, by both parties, that the "milk of human kindness," was by no means in excess. In the course of a few months the time of Conference arrived, when the Doctor had again to appear before—shall we say—his brethren? if so, they were now to become his judges. Here his outside friends could not avail him, and it may truly be said he stood almost alone. An abstract from the Minutes of the Wesleyan Conference of 1835, held in Sheffield, will show in part what took place.

"The official statement of the Manchester District Committee, containing their views and resolutions on the various parts of Dr. Warren's case, was read to the Conference. He was then heard, at great

length, in his own defence; and, at his request, Mr. Bromley also was heard on his behalf. After some of the members of the Manchester District Committee had spoken on points referred to in the defence, and after several questions, calculated to elicit more fully the facts of the case, had been proposed by other members of the Conference, and Dr. Warren had been allowed full opportunity to answer and explain accordingly, he was told that, if he had any further remarks to offer, the Conference were ready to hear him. He declined, however, to say more on the subject.

The decision of the District Committee, suspending the ministerial functions of Dr. Warren, until he should submit to take his trial, is approved and confirmed by the Conference.

In the judgment of the Conference, the following facts have been fully proved :—

1. That by various publications and speeches, Dr. Warren has most unjustly and inexcusably defamed and slandered the character of many preachers and official members of the Connexion individually, and of the Manchester District Committee and the Conference collectively.

2. That he has committed numerous flagrant offences against the essential principles of our Connexional union, by overt acts directly tending to subvert the constitution, and to destroy the

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purity, the peace, and, eventually, even the existence of our United Societies; especially,—

By having concurred in organising an *Association*, or combination, opposed to the discipline of our Societies, and united for the avowed purpose of effecting great and subversive changes in our general system :—

By joining with others, in the same combination, to establish separate assemblies and places of worship, and by arranging and publishing a plan for religious services in those separate places of worship, in direct and contemptuous opposition to the lawful authority which had placed him under suspension :—

By co-operating with the combination aforesaid, in convening and addressing mixed assemblages, for the purpose of destroying all confidence in the Conference, and disturbing and dividing our Societies :—

By uniting and assisting, in particular, at a late meeting of persons calling themselves ‘Delegates;’ at which meeting, resolutions and propositions, opposed to the essential principles of the Connexion, were adopted, and measures of disturbance and division were concerted; and—

By continuing, notwithstanding the decisions of the Vice-Chancellor, to resist, and in various ways seeking to overturn, the discipline of our Connexion.

That on these and other similar grounds, and

because Dr. Warren, far from having manifested any contrition for his many offences, or expressed any intention or disposition to abandon the evil courses which he has so injuriously pursued, has, on the contrary, plainly avowed his determination to persist in the views and purposes expressed by him in a certain published letter, and in a note to the fourth edition of one of his pamphlets, and has in various ways declared to the Conference, that it could not retain his services without consenting to make such alterations in our long-established constitution and discipline, as the Conference deems to be great and essential; the Conference unanimously judges and resolves that it cannot, with Christian propriety and fidelity, allow Dr. Warren to have a place as a Preacher in our Connexion. He is, therefore, hereby accordingly expelled."

In another account of this transaction we find this record :—

"It was moved that the Minutes of the Manchester Special District Meeting be confirmed.

Mr. Beaumont delivered an animated speech, in which he objected to the constitution of the Special District Meeting, especially in appointing Mr. J. Crowther as its Secretary, and in excluding Mr. Bromley.

Mr. Bromley spoke against the motion, and in vindication of Dr. Warren, whom he characterised as a great and good man.

After some explanation and discussion, the motion was put, and passed unanimously, with the single exception of Mr. Bromley.

Mr. Gaulter then moved that Dr. Warren be forthwith expelled, which was seconded, and supported by Mr. Galland.

Mr. Bromley moved, as an amendment, that Dr. Warren be not expelled. The motion, however, was not seconded.

A general clamour ensued for his expulsion; many of the Preachers uttering vindictive and bitter expressions.

Mr. Barnard Slater expressed his detestation of the Doctor and his proceedings, and said that if he were not expelled, both himself and two or three hundred members on his circuit would leave the Connexion.

Mr. W. M. Bunting also declared that he would leave the Connexion if Dr. Warren were not expelled.

Dr. Bunting then read a string of resolutions in unison with the motion for expulsion, and begged that the brethren would give them their most serious consideration previous to their assembling the following morning.

On Saturday morning Mr. T. Rowland seconded Mr. Bromley's motion for retaining Dr. Warren. The whole of this sitting was occupied in discussing the original resolution, which was carried unanimously, with the single exception of Mr.

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Rowland, the Preachers standing up in approbation of the expulsion. Subsequently Mr. Rowland was required to apologise for having seconded Mr. Bromley's motion! He accounted for his vote on the ground that, though Dr. Warren had transgressed, yet that the Conference ought not to cut him off, but continue him at least for one year.

On Monday morning Dr. Warren attended to receive the sentence of Conference; he was firm and unmoved during the brief address of the President to his old colleague in the ministry—the parties having been stationed together at Rochester immediately before the Rev. R. Reece came to Sheffield, three years since. The President having discharged his painful office, by reading the sentence of expulsion, Dr. Warren got upon the seat of the pew in which he was standing, and, in energetic terms, protested against the sentence as turning him out of the inheritance of his fathers; intimating, at the same time, that he should consider it due to himself to take the only course open to him for the recovery of his position.”

Before these proceedings had been finished, delegations from various parts had assembled together in Sheffield; and after holding several meetings in Surrey-street Chapel they asked for an interview of such deputation as they might appoint, with the Conference, or with a committee that might be

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appointed to meet them. Strange to say, this reasonable request was not granted.

An address, however, *did* reach the Conference, and reads as follows :—

“Dear Brethren,—The serious and alarming disturbance which at present prevails throughout a considerable part of the Wesleyan Connexion, forms a reason sufficient to justify the unusual application which we thus make to you.

We deplore the evils of disunion and division which have already accompanied that disturbance, and anticipate with the most painful feelings, still greater evils as likely to occur, unless efficient measures be immediately adopted to arrest the progress of disorganization. We feel ourselves united to the system of Methodism by the strong tie of grateful affection. Many of us have been connected with it from our earliest years. Ye are our witnesses that we have cheerfully, according to our ability, in our several spheres, endeavoured to diffuse its influence and promote its objects, and in so doing have incurred heavy pecuniary responsibilities. In its communion we still wish to labour—to live and to die ; and our hearts’ desire and prayer to God is that Methodism, strictly conformed to the principles contained in His holy word, may bless our children and children’s children to the end of time. We might on these and on other



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grounds assert a personal claim to the attention we solicit ; but when we inform you that we have been commissioned to hold communication with you, by a vast number, comprising tens of thousands of members of societies, over which you have been placed, we feel assured that you will give the most serious regard to our requests. Brethren, it is union for which we are contending, and not division, —union on a solid and scriptural foundation, and we confidently hope that you will co-operate with us in stilling the agitation which is so injurious to the character and destructive to the success of our community. In the fear of the Lord we submit to you our wishes. It is for you to pour oil on the troubled waters. You have the power to prolong and increase the discord and strife now so unhappily prevailing among us, and you have also the power under God to render our Connexion prosperous and happy. Permit us to state—and the statement is not made in anger, but in sorrow,—that in our opinion the causes of the grievances of which complaint is at present so loudly and so generally made, is the assumption on your part of an authority which, both as to its nature and extent, is inconsistent with the brotherly relation, which ought to subsist among us. It is on this account that we so anxiously look to you for the removal of those grievances. We request you to allow us personally to communicate with you on the subject ;

either by admitting us into your Conference, or by appointing some of your number who may meet with us, or in any other equitable mode which may be more convenient to you.

We are prepared, respectfully and affectionately, to receive any suggestions towards the establishment of peace, which you may deem proper to make to us in the course of such communication, as we are also ready clearly and fully to state what we believe will most conduce to the welfare of Methodism at the present crisis."

The Conference sent a reply to the "one hundred" delegates. We have only space for part of the answer, which is given from the printed Minutes:—

"The 'Address to the Methodist Conference in Sheffield,' dated August 1st, 1835, professing to proceed 'from a numerous Meeting of Wesleyan Delegates,' and signed, 'George Cookman, Chairman, Ralph Grindrod, Secretary,' has been read. The Conference are constrained, on a calm review of various circumstances, to entertain the conviction, that the meeting from which the Address has emanated, instead of being as it is delusively termed, a meeting of Wesleyan Delegates, is in reality an adjourned meeting of the body of persons calling themselves 'The Grand Central Association,' of

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which a 'Provisional Meeting' was held in Manchester in the month of April last. With such an Association, the Conference could not hold communication, without violating their duty to God, their fidelity to the great trust and deposit of genuine Methodism committed specially to their care, their pastoral obligations to the immense and overwhelming majority of their beloved Societies, both at home and in foreign lands, by whom the divisive and disorderly principles of the Association are held in just abhorrence, and the proper regard which they owe to their own ministerial honour and character, so foully aspersed by the leading actors in the present scheme of organized disturbance and agitation.

While the Conference, in the fear of God, announce their firm resolution on this subject, and are persuaded that it will have the cordial approbation of the great mass of our Societies,—and especially of those whose standing, piety, intelligence, and active support of Methodism, best entitle their opinions on such topics to respectful consideration,—they feel it also due to their beloved flocks in general, to those among the dissatisfied portions of their Societies, whom they willingly consider rather as the deluded and misled, than as the deluders and misleaders of the party, and to their own sincere and long-cherished sentiments of what is right and fitting, to make the following

Declaration:—viz., That it is their intention to take into their most affectionate and careful consideration, partly at this Conference, as far as time can be found for such a task, when the *indispensable* business of their Sessions shall have been transacted, and partly at the earliest subsequent opportunity, some of the most material of those subjects of discipline which have of late excited the attention of the Connexion.

The Conference also are most happy to take this opportunity of declaring, that, while decidedly opposed to the recognition of any divisive and agitating association or confederacy whatsoever, they are at all times ready to receive, with the most respectful attention, the friendly communications and suggestions of any member of their societies (if unconnected with the 'Grand Central Association,' or any such mischievous combination), on topics tending, not to the subversion, but to the conservation of our doctrines and discipline, and of the great and vital interests of the Connexion. If any parties, supposing themselves aggrieved or injured by certain acts of local discipline which have occurred during the last year, be disposed to forward their complaints to the Conference, in a peaceful and Christian spirit, and will promise to refrain, in the meantime, from all hostile proceedings, provision shall be made as far as possible, by special deputations, from the Conference to the Circuits

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concerned, which deputations, in conjunction with the District Committee, shall be charged to enter upon a fair and impartial revision of those transactions, and to do justice to all parties on the basis of those long-tried and Scriptural principles which the laws and usages of Methodism have ever recognised, and from which the Conference, by the blessing of God, ARE RESOLVED NEVER TO DEPART.”

Failing in their efforts and disappointed in their hopes, the delegates returned to their homes, not with any intention to relinquish the object they sought to accomplish ; on the contrary, their purpose to do this became more than ever intensified. The strife increased, agitation spread far and wide. This, however, the Conference authorities would not tolerate. Very soon the ‘agitators’ were charged, tried, and expelled ! We shall give an outline of one case as a fair example of many others. The trial took place at a Leaders’ Meeting held in the vestry of a Chapel in Liverpool. The Rev. Samuel Jackson was the Superintendent, and chairman of the meeting. Mr. David Rowland was the offender, against whom the following charges were preferred :—

“ First,—Calling a meeting of Methodist officers at his house, on Friday evening, the 24th of October.

Second,—Assisting in the formation of a certain Association, at the Bethel Rooms.

Third,—Advocating the objects of the said

society, at a public meeting in the Music Hall, on the 21st of November.

These charges were proved by the witnesses present.

Mr. Rowland.—‘I demand to be informed by what law I am now being tried? Am I to understand that you are now trying me as a class leader?’

Mr. Jackson.—‘No; as a private member.’

Mr. Rowland.—‘I insist upon it. I am now on my trial as a leader. I ask, am I, or am I not, a member of this meeting? Why, this proceeding is monstrous. You know you cannot remove me but by a vote of this meeting; and to get over the difficulty, you affect to consider me as a private member. In that case, what immorality am I charged with?’

Mr. Barnes, not a member of the Association, rose and moved the following resolution, which was seconded by Mr. Brooks:—

‘That the charges against Brother Rowland are considered frivolous and vexatious, and that Brother Rowland be affectionately requested by this meeting to continue connected with us, and give us his services as usual.’

The Chairman.—‘I must have the opinion of the meeting as to the charges. You who are of opinion that Brother Rowland had a meeting of the kind stated at his house; that he was at the Bethel Rooms assisting in the formation of the Associa-

tion; and that he was at the Music Hall, and made the speech which has been read, will signify it by holding up your hands.' Six hands were held up.

'You who are of a contrary mind hold up your hands.' *None.*

Mr. Jackson. — 'Now, Mr. Ashton, you will read the law against these kind of proceedings.'

Mr. Ashton read the law of 1796 :— 'Let no man nor number of men in our Connexion, on any account or occasion, circulate letters, call meetings, do or attempt to do anything new, till it has first been appointed by the Conference.'

After some discussion as to whether this law had been repealed, or was still in existence, which the accused denied,

Mr. Jackson rose and said, 'Mr. Marsden being the chairman of the district, he had invited him as his adviser, and he now requested him to say whether the law of 1796, referred to, had ever been done away.'

Mr. Marsden, standing with hat in hand, said, 'He was just going, for he could not stop to hear the laws of the Connexion so spoken of, and he must state, in reply to the question put by the Superintendent, he being a preacher at the time, that the law quoted was the law still; it had not been rescinded.'

Mr. Rowland.— 'If so, the concessions of 1797

were of no avail ; the time, the labour of our forefathers in wringing those concessions from an unwilling Conference, were thrown away.'

Mr. Barnes then pressed the chairman to put *his* motion to the vote. After some hesitation, Mr. Jackson stated he would take another week to consider of it, and at once dismissed the meeting.

At the next meeting the chairman repeated the charges against Brother David Rowland, for attending illegal meetings, &c., which he said had been fully proved at the last Leaders' Meeting, and notwithstanding the indignant protestations from all parts of the room, immediately pronounced, 'That Brother David Rowland was no longer a member of the Methodist Society.'

The meeting appeared completely astounded at such an arbitrary and illegal assumption of power in the chairman, and several brethren declared that Brother Rowland had broken no law of Methodism to which he was amenable ; and that, consequently, they should still consider him both a member of Society, and also of that meeting ; upon which Mr. Barnes rose, and read a protest, which was instantly adopted, and signed on the spot by *nineteen* out of twenty-seven brethren present.

Mr. Rowland then rose, and claimed to be heard. Mr. Jackson commanded him to be silent. The meeting insisted upon their Brother Rowland

being heard, declaring he was not expelled. As soon as order was obtained,—

Mr. Rowland said,—‘ Brethren, I feel a sweet, a delightful sense of God’s love and favour. I love Him, and I know He loves me ; and in reference to what has brought me under the anathema of the Superintendent, I have to say that throughout I have acted from a deep, a solemn, and a deliberate conviction of imperative duty to God and to this religious society, to which I have been united from my earliest years. I will just add, that it is a matter of satisfaction to think that the time of secrecy and concealment is gone by. These acts of ecclesiastical cruelty and injustice shall be proclaimed from one end of this land to the other. It is the privacy within the walls of a chapel vestry, which has been systematically enforced and observed,—especially when acts of priestly tyranny were perpetrated,—that has encouraged you to go to the present lengths. That time has gone by ; and this night’s deed of darkness and oppression, I frankly and solemnly assure you, shall be exposed to the view, the animadversion and condemnation of the Christian public.’ ”

Seeking for awhile longer, but in vain, for certain concessions on the part of Conference, as a redress of their grievances, the complainants, wearied and discouraged, retired from the field of conflict ; and after necessary preliminary arrange-

ments formed themselves into a separate body, afterwards called the “WESLEYAN METHODIST ASSOCIATION.” They possessed many able ministers and excellent office-bearers. Ten years after their organization they had a fellowship amounting to 21,176 members, and existed as a prosperous church for a considerable number of years.

CHAPTER V

FROM 1835 TO 1847.

WE now proceed to consider circumstances connected with the greatest division of all, which occurred in 1849 and 1850. Various reasons may be assigned, with tolerable correctness, for the expulsions and secessions which then took place. Ever since 1835, there had been a lingering and growing dissatisfaction, in many intelligent minds, with the enactments of the Conference of that year. Numbers who still remained in the Wesleyan Society complained of what were known as "The Official Documents of 1835," relating to Travelling Preachers, members, and office-bearers. Touching the first of these, it was alleged that, without any previous notice, a minister might be questioned *instantly*, in the presence of his brethren, on any subject affecting his moral character and conduct, and required, then and there, to give a clear and satisfactory answer. The late Rev. James Bromley denounced this *new* regulation or law, as containing the popish principle, called "Question by

Penalty ;” declared it was contrary to New Testament requirement (Matt. xviii. 15, 16 and 17), and that it was “steeped in apostacy and unbelief.” With regard to members and office-bearers, it was affirmed that in the laws now proclaimed by the Conference there was a departure from the laws of 1797; that then a member could not be expelled, nor a Leader removed from his office, but by the consent of the majority of a Leaders’ Meeting; but that *now* this power was transferred to the Superintendent Preacher, and remained exclusively in his possession. And it was very properly thought that such a serious responsibility would be much safer in the hands of “twelve good men and true,” than in the hands of one only; who, although a minister and pastor, did not necessarily possess any peculiar sanctity or heavenly wisdom, that might not be possessed, in an equal degree, by those belonging to the laity. In other words, that the power of acquittal, suspension, or expulsion, should rest with ministers and office-bearers conjointly. On this matter we shall transcribe “the letter of the law,” and the thoughtful reader can form his, or her, own opinion. In relation to ministers—

“The Conference *unanimously* DECLARES as follows :—

That not only the Conference, but all its District Committees, whether ordinary or special, possess the undoubted right of instituting, in their

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official and collective character, any inquiry or investigation, which they may deem expedient, into the moral, Christian, or ministerial conduct of the Preachers under their care, even although no formal or regular accusation may have been previously announced on the part of any individual; and that they have also the authority of coming to such decisions thereupon, as to them may seem most conformable to the laws of the New Testament, and to the rules and usages of our Connexion.”—Conn. Minutes, page 112.

Applying to members and office-bearers, the resolutions in the Minutes of 1797 are thus expressed :—

“No person shall be expelled from the Society for immorality, till such immorality be proved at a Leaders’ Meeting.”

“No person shall be appointed a Leader or Steward, or be removed from his office, but in conjunction with the Leaders’ Meeting.”

See now what is recorded in the Minutes of 1835, page 153:—

“If a majority of the Leaders who vote at the meeting shall be ‘satisfied’ that sufficient proof is adduced, to establish the fact of a wilful and habitual negligence, or of the violation of some Scriptural or Methodistical Rule, and shall give a verdict to that effect, then the Leaders’ Meeting has discharged *its whole part* of the painful duty to be

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performed, and the case is left in the hands of the Superintendent. On *him* devolves, in his pastoral character, as the person whose peculiar call and province it is to 'watch over that soul' as one that 'must give an account,' the sole right and duty of deciding on the measures to be adopted towards the offender, in consequence of the verdict thus pronounced. He must consider his solemn responsibility, personally and officially, to God and to the church of Christ, and his special obligation to care most tenderly and anxiously for the spiritual and eternal welfare of the individual whose conduct is implicated; and, impartially applying the laws of God, as found in the Holy Scriptures, or the specific rules of our body, (as the case may be), to the facts which have been declared to have been proved, as involving a violation of those laws or rules, he must prayerfully form the best judgment he can, respecting the nature and degree of the ecclesiastical penalty to be inflicted; whether censure and reproof, in private or in public,—temporary suspension from Methodistical privileges,—putting the member back again into a state of mere probation,—or finally, the extreme penalty of expulsion."

Another thing, it is believed, which contributed not a little to bring about the disruption of 1849, was a long essay written by the late Rev. Dr. John Campbell, one of the most able and powerful writers of his day. It was published in "The Christian

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Witness" for January, 1847 The author descanted in forcible words upon the polity and general administration of Methodism, viewing it also in the aspect of its religious and spiritual character; at the same time, pointing out what he conceived to be defective and evil in the system. The effect was indicated, to some extent, by one of many letters addressed to the Doctor himself.

"I have been for many years an admirer of your uncompromising love of truth, and of your courageous manner of defending it. Your article on 'Wesleyan Methodism' in the WITNESS for the present month, has, if possible, increased my admiration, and to such a degree, that I cannot refrain from letting you know that it is the very best thing that I have ever seen on the subject. As a Wesleyan Methodist of thirty-one years' standing, I thank you most heartily, for your honest exposure of some of those evils that have tended to damp the zeal and lower the tone of piety amongst us. The following is extracted from a letter I received a few days ago, from a particular friend of mine:—'Do you still take the CHRISTIAN WITNESS? Have you read the article on "Wesleyan Methodism" in the number for this month? If so, I would like to know your opinion of it. I consider it one of the most telling things that has yet appeared, because of *the truth* it contains, and the quarter from which it has come. I should think that article and others

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which it is more than probable it will call forth, will be a second edition of Gideon's barley-cake, that tumbled into the host of Midian and upset their tents! Through this article, and some other things that have been lately published, the eyes of the public are being opened, and consternation and dismay are spreading through the Conference Connexion. There is an attempt in the *Watchman* of the 13th instant, to break the force of Dr. Campbell's statements, and to excite the sympathy of the public; but alas! the great question is, *Are his statements true or false?* WE KNOW THEY ARE TOO TRUE."

The Doctor was severely rebuked on account of what was considered his uncalled for interference. But this did not deter him from his purpose, he still held on his way. The first essay was followed by several more, in one of which he says:—"We have testified; the nations have listened, and are now pondering the testimony. We will speak yet again, and again we shall be heard under every sky. We have spoken to facts, and counter testimony, by whomsoever given, will be unavailing. We have spoken in love; the Wesleyan people know it, and are proof against all attempts either to pervert our statements or misrepresent our intentions. In opening our columns to the discussion we feel we have done homage to truth, and lent a voice to the afflicted to plead their own wrongs.


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Our jurisdiction is not confined to England and the Independents ; it is co-extensive with the great globe and the church of the living God. Whatever concerns the Christian Church or the human race concerns us. Our sole vocation is, to advance the good of man ; and in order to that our only instrument is truth—truth—eternal truth ! On this we take our stand, and from that position we can be displaced by nothing human.”

The reader will excuse us for not withholding the following paragraph, which concludes another of the essays :—

“ One word more : One wish ! Is it too much to hope for ? Would that Dr. Bunting, the justly acknowledged *Peel* of his party, could be induced to walk in the footsteps of that great statesman ! Let him close his imperial career by one great act, which shall atone for the errors of a long life, but too successfully devoted to the interests of an *oligarchical* despotism. Let him, by an exercise of his eminent talents, and his all-pervading influence, emancipate the Methodist people from their grievous bondage, and thus endear to them his name through all generations. That observant and experienced man is too sagacious not to see that this emancipation *must come* ! If the people’s rights be obstinately refused, they will be forcibly recovered. His be the distinction, the glory, the bliss, of anticipating the demand which will at

length be made in a voice of thunder, and of conducting the goodly vessel of Methodism into a peaceful haven of rational and Scriptural freedom ! Enough—more than enough for posthumous renown, if on his tomb shall be inscribed,

HERE LIES THE LIBERATOR OF THE METHODISTS.”

Soon after Dr. Campbell's essays had been published, the notorious “Fly Sheets” made their appearance. The fact that they were anonymous was, in our judgment, nothing to their credit but a great deal to their condemnation. It is only fair to insert something of what was alleged in justification of the course adopted :—“ There is wisdom in working under cover, when it is certain you would not be listened to openly. Under cover we can go unmolested, till the whole tale is told—till the whole case is opened ; otherwise, an endeavour would be made to stop us on the outset. Junius was aware of his strength in this respect. Why should any class of men, in an attempt to correct evils, and to accomplish a great good for others, risk their own position and interests in a community, for whose success they have laboured, to whose support they liberally contributed, and which they yet ardently love ? Why preclude the possibility of enjoying its privileges in its improved state, after winning them, by being persecuted from the body ? Agreeable to general usage, and the common consent of all parties, men are allowed to transact

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business in their own way—to meet their opponents with their own weapons—to adopt their own mode of warfare, being left either secretly to spring the mine, or to take the open field. When things are wrong, we conclude it right to correct them; to correct them by such means as our best judgment may suggest at the time. It is not usual for one party to ask another how they would wish to be attacked; each side assumes the right of thinking and acting for itself; and of this privilege we shall not allow ourselves to be deprived.”

While freely admitting the force of all this we are still of opinion that such publications as those in question, containing gross charges affecting the religious character and moral conduct of Christian ministers, ought, in common honesty, to bear the author's name; in order that, if need be, he may be called upon to substantiate his statements, or else honourably retract them. We possess the grand letters of Junius, and have read them with profound interest, with deep attention, but although bearing that name, they were in reality anonymous. There might have been reasons, grounded on political expediency, why this keen censor dealt his blows in secret; yet not so in the case before us. It is certain, however, that in *this* case the greatest secrecy was carefully preserved. Not only was the name of the author withheld, but also that of the printer, and to prevent detection, as to authorship,

the sheets, or rather pamphlets, were posted in different towns widely apart. They were addressed to Wesleyan ministers exclusively. Indeed, the subjects treated on may be regarded as ministerial questions—only. The rights or wrongs of the people, if thought of, are not even once mentioned. As the “Fly Sheets,” considered in relation to the effects of their circulation, produced the greatest disruption and numerical loss ever known to Methodism, it will be necessary to give a brief outline of their general contents.

They were issued in five successive numbers, each containing from forty to fifty pages of closely printed matter. No. 1 treats on what is termed “Location, Centralization, and Secularization.” The parties chiefly aimed at were the London officers, such as the Missionary Secretaries, Book Stewards, and others. These gentlemen, it was said, were retained so long in their various offices, that they preferred to continue in them, rather than return to the more arduous work of a Circuit. Moreover, they were charged with plots and selfish schemes, inimical to their brethren and to the interests of Methodism in general. In the opening remarks we meet with this avowal,—“Our object in these sheets is not to sow discord in the body, we are anxious to preserve them, as far as possible, within the range of the priesthood; and whatever may be the quality or amount of sensation produced

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in the ministerial circle, we are resolved at least to make the attempt to diminish, if not to remove, the evils of which complaints have been so long made by one class of men against another." It is asserted that,—“ Location is opposed to the spirit and practice of Methodism, as introduced and established by its Founder. He furnished a fine practical exposition of his own, saying,—‘ The world is my parish ; ’ a saying often quoted by the located gentry of the metropolis, with whose habits it is in admirable keeping ! No man, calling himself a minister, and more especially a Wesleyan minister, is at liberty to think he is acting up to his commission, while he is confining his labours to one solitary spot, and to one small portion of the realm, if it be convenient or even practicable for him to publish the good news beyond the sphere in which he has placed himself. Some think otherwise ; but whatever might be the reply offered to them, we are not bound to reason with itinerant ministers precisely in the same way. We place the latter at once in the hands of John Wesley. What says he to some official members, who, long ago, were making an inroad on his itinerant plan ? ‘ I beg, therefore, my brethren, for the love of God ; for the love of me, your old and well-nigh worn-out servant ; for the love of ancient Methodism, which, if itinerancy is interrupted, will speedily come to nothing ; for the love of mercy, justice, and truth,

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all of which will be grievously violated by any allowed inroads on this system; I beg that you will exert yourselves to the utmost to preserve our itinerant system unimpaired. It is a shame for any Methodist preacher to confine himself to one place. I know, were I myself to preach one whole year in one place, I should preach both myself and most of my congregation asleep. We have found, by a long experience, that a frequent change of teachers is best. I cannot see, therefore, how any preacher, while he is in health and strength, can ever fix in one place, without a grievous wound to his own conscience and damage to the general work of God.' And shall any calling themselves his sons in the Gospel, and affecting to be zealous in the maintenance and promotion of the cause which he had at heart, fritter down his system of itinerancy? Shall Messrs. Bunting, Alder, Beecham, Jackson, Hoole, and others, whose presence is falsely assumed to be so necessary, not to say, vitally important, to the right management of our missionary and other interests in London and elsewhere; shall these be the privileged few, who, at the very time they are lauding Mr. Wesley's plan and procedure, and affecting to be so anxious for its conservation, to destroy it, by locating themselves in London, and by bartering the spirit of the ministers of Jesus, for one of fleshly ease and sloth? Spirit of consistency and honesty! whither art thou fled?"

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It was further objected to Location that it was prejudicial to health.—“While some are worn down by incessant application to study in one department, others present—not through hard labour—an unnatural degree of obesity; the well-clothed skeletons of the latter of whom, we leave to speak for themselves. It is certainly not a subject for merriment, but what must have been the feelings of the Parisians, when one of the Missionary Secretaries from London, on trying to enter the pulpit, found himself in a fix like Punch, in the door-way. Good Mr. Toase was fortunately at hand, ascended the pulpit stairs, and by dint of physical force, pushed him through the entrance. It was not stated to us in what way he made his egress; but we have no reason to believe that he would scale the battlements in the face of the audience. ‘A farce at the commencement of the service was sufficient, without one at the close.’”

In another place it was contended that Location, “Is the fruitful parent of intrigue. While the stewards and friends are looking in one direction, the located preachers are looking in another; and employ their influence to secure such men only in the metropolitan appointments, as will either chime in with, or not oppose their measures. Take the case of Mr. Joseph Fowler. He was appointed for London; but there was no second station found for him; he was not made of suf-

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ficiently malleable materials for the clique. Mr. John Scott, on the other hand, has been hawked about from year to year, in London, till the people have been drugged with him. A law which was made to keep the venerable Henry Moore and others out of the city, after a limited period, was violated to keep him in, under the pretext of his being so useful as a treasurer to the funds, as though it were one of the highest honours of apostleship to hold the bag, or no other had honesty, prudence, or ability sufficient to hold it but himself. The fact is, he has been found a convenient tool for Dr. Bunting to accomplish work in which he does not wish to appear as the leader. When a man is not approved, arguments are always at hand, either to get quit of him, or prevent his station." There is much more to the same effect, which we must pass by.

On the subject of Centralization it is remarked, "This is an advance upon Location, inasmuch as the individual only may be located; but here we refer to a number of persons thrown together for specific objects; and the objects themselves advanced as a plea for binding them to the spot." "The centralization system leads to Tyranny—Pride—Partiality. The party domineer, and ride over the heads of others. Methodism with all its excellences,—and let the community be shown that has more,—is admirably adapted, when abused, to

the purpose of being employed by either a Jesuit or a tyrant, or both, if possessed of ability, for selfish, personal, arbitrary ends. Its mechanism is complex and not seen through at once; its machinery is vast and connected; and a man may be working, so to speak, at one part, and in one room, though closely adjoining, so as not to be seen, and yet to affect the whole."

Touching Secularization, it is said,—“ This endangers not only the Connexion, but the souls of the persons in question. Being located, and constituting a centre, towards which money is continually flowing, and where matters of finance constitute the grand staple of their business and conversation, scarcely anything, save that which is worldly, is permitted to come over their spirits. We do not lose sight of the fact that, in consequence of the largeness of the Connexion, more time must be necessarily spent upon mere financial matters both by Committees and the Conference; it is against the secularizing tendency of these things we direct our remarks.

It does not comport with God's general dealings, that spiritual prosperity should follow, when guided solely by the hand of secularity. Where is the prosperity of the English Church? It is directed by the hand of a set of Temporals, falsely denominated Spirituals. Well may the missionary part of our church languish under the hands of the

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Lords Temporal in the Grand Centenary Halls. There is scarcely a returned missionary with whom they have not had a squabble, and several have been compelled to go without redress of grievances, and the payment of their just demand. We can name the men.

If the preachers can only be brought to set their faces against METROPOLITAN LOCATION, CENTRALIZATION, and SECULARIZATION—if they can be brought to ring a constant CHANGE in the CONNEXIONAL COMMITTEES, and to break up the NOMINATION COMMITTEE, then whatever future Cæsars may arise, all attempts to enslave will prove abortive,—equal rights will be maintained—brotherly love, instead of suspicion, fear, and jealousy, will be restored—the President alone will receive his own elevation—and that President, as he can ascend no higher, will, like the Moderator in the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, be satisfied with the honour once in his life.

By order of the CORRESPONDING COMMITTEE for detecting, exposing, and correcting Abuses. London, Manchester, Bristol, Liverpool, Birmingham, Hull, Glasgow, 1846.”

No. 2 descants on subjects connected with THE PRESIDENTIAL CHAIR, THE PLATFORM, AND CONNEXIONAL COMMITTEES. In one of the opening paragraphs it is observed,—“We find, since the issue of our first ‘Fly Sheets,’ that vengeance is

vowed by those whose nests have been disturbed, against the authors, who have been loaded with every species of abuse, and whom it is their great anxiety to apprehend. For their satisfaction, we have to inform them, that the authorship rests with neither one, two, nor three. The business, however, of the Metropolitan clique and their provincial associates is not—‘Who is the author?’ but—‘What is the Argument?’ not with those who prefer the charges, but how those charges are to be refuted. We appeal to facts, and we appeal to figures. The cry of authorship has often been resorted to as a blinder; and by deafening others with this, as well as hoodwinking them, the parties charged with culpability have slipped off unexamined; and, therefore, undetected. A discovery of the authors is intended to be a substitute for a correction of the evils. If there is a disposition to correct the abuses of which we complain, it can be done without our being known.”

For the President’s chair various qualifications are pointed out and described, such as—“Age—Wisdom—Disinterestedness—Firmness—Dignity.” Under the first of these it is observed,—“Talent of a high order will, indeed, always have weight in the Wesleyan Connexion. But we may safely predict, that the Conference will not again select for its President a man of twenty years’ standing, as in the case of Mr. Bunting. We remarked in

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our last, the adroit manner in which he secured the chair for himself, by the augmentation of votes of men off ourteen years' standing. By this measure, he ousted the old standards, but it was only to introduce a monopoly of his own. Sometime prior to that period, old Henry Moore, who saw which way the current was drifting, said in the Conference, 'Beware of that young man, brethren, or he will give trouble to some of you.' After this, the venerable Richard Reece remarked in private, 'He is too high for us ; we must pull him down.' But he was more than a match for both Richard and Henry : they, good men, like John Wesley, took things as they rose before them ; Jabez had his plans laid."

What is advanced respecting the PLATFORM is not less amusing than it is instructive and suggestive :—

" Though a part of Doctor Bunting's policy, it certainly, abstracted from that, has neither beauty nor comeliness to plead. It is a formless, unsightly, inconvenient monstrosity, and would appear much better in the centre of a market-place, or in the front of a gaol, mounted by the executioner with his axe, than in the house of God, in the midst of an assembly of Christian ministers.

The brethren were not fully aware at first how it would work, and were the less suspicious for some time, from the circumstance of platforms being familiarized to the eye in Missionary Meet-

ings. Its introduction was sly, unobtrusive, and at first viewed as almost necessary; but for some years past, its effects have been wofully felt: the scaffold as well as the platform has been recognized.

There was no platform in Mr. Wesley's day, nor for many years after, and yet, when anything does not suit the Great Ruler's taste or purpose, no man pretends to greater scrupulosity than himself, in any departure from the plans and proceedings of Mr. Wesley; and though, agreeably to his own doctrine, he is, when in the chair, not himself, but Mr. Wesley; yet he can afford a position of equality one year, during presidency, for the sake of seven years' equality with the President, when out of the chair. We are queer creatures for giving and taking, especially when we can obtain more than an equivalent in return. But just imagine the venerable shade of Wesley to enter the Conference, and fix his eye on this wonderful erection—this piece of parade—graced with four Missionary Secretaries, three letter-writers, four Secretaries to the Conference, two Governors of Schools, with other functionaries too numerous to mention.

There is no platform in the House of Commons, raising a few ex-ministers the head and shoulders over their brethren; nor in the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, from the government of which Church we took our District Meetings.

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Why not imitate the dignity and simplicity of the same Church, in the absence of such elevations? The Wesleyan platform is certainly unique in form, in character and intent. It leads young men to assume an air of importance; makes them pert, forward, officious. As 'shallow draughts' of knowledge intoxicate the brain, so undue elevation not unfrequently produces the same effect. It gives the few an undue advantage over the many; which is unsafe in a body pre-eminently one. We have often thought that arguments coming from that elevated place,—although very light, when weighed in the balance,—have been taken to possess unusual force, like light substances, which acquire momentum by falling from a height. The whole apparatus is an anomaly. What can be more out of keeping than the *President*, (the highest officer), and a *Letter-Writer*, (the lowest officer), placed side by side? Moreover, the President is hidden, in great part, from view by a huge box, like an auctioneer behind his desk! the back part of the platform being necessarily higher than where the President sits. Now, we contend, that he who is to preserve the assembly in a state of order and decorum, during the transactions of its business, should have his seat so elevated and circumstanced, as to give him the most perfect oversight and command of the members of the assembly, with the greatest ease to himself, and without the least prostration of dignity; giving

him in actual position what he has officially, a point of elevation which will at once place the entire assembly below him.

A Conference platform is anything but a true representation of the talent, piety, and glory of the body. The public naturally enough suppose that the men whom they see crowding our platforms on Conferential occasions, constitute the weight and very cream of our Connexion for ministerial talent, piety, and excellency; and the men who ordinarily throng our platforms on such occasions, evidently entertain and foster the idea. But, is it as the public and such men think? Far otherwise; and sometimes the very contrary.

Though we do not attach much importance to it, yet we think it worth while observing, that as the time of holding the Conference is the hottest season of the year, it is necessary that the President should be preserved as cool as possible, and therefore, elevated and apart, so that he may not be thronged and melted by having a crowd of persons around, and on a level with himself; and this is the more necessary, if he is to be kept in health, vigour, and comfort, through the whole session; seeing he has punctually to commence and conclude every sitting of Conference during the whole of its business. But this is a personal, rather than a Connexional objection; it is on the latter ground we enter our solemn protest against

the platform, as an unmitigated evil, *and a stifler of the spirit of freedom.*"

Complaints are next made against the "Connexional Committees"—especially as to the mode of their nomination and election. "We shall find," it is stated, "this part of Dr. Bunting's policy characterised with as much depth, caution, and cunning, as anything that bears the stamp of his mind. The transaction of so large a portion of the business of the Conference, by means of its Committees, renders it a matter of importance that these Committees should be chosen to the satisfaction of all the brethren." To prevent what is called favouritism, the Ballot is recommended, against which objections are cited and thus answered:—1 'It would occupy too much time.' To this we reply, that the general business of the Conference might be going on: just so soon as a man can select and write twelve names the work may be done. The fifteen General Committees may be formed in this way in a couple of hours. Preachers are not quite so ignorant of their brethren as these Committee-makers imagine, and ought not to be insulted by such implications. 2. 'The balloting system is odious and often cowardly.' We have to state here that cowardice and concealment come, as a charge, with but an ill-grace from persons who are so partial to closed doors, privacy, and packed Committees. 3. 'The Ballot would


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defeat the design of secrecy.' Our answer is, the object is not secrecy: it is freedom from all improper restraint. 4. 'It is an American exotic—not British.' Admitting it,—all things are not necessarily bad that come from America: but the fact is we have traced it to Palestine. 5. 'No man need be afraid of voting openly, seeing he can suffer no inconvenience.' Without entering on this at present, we could tell some tales that would make this more than doubtful."

This number closes thus:—"Our advice to the brethren is, till we appear on other subjects, 1. That in whatever direction the London clique are found looking for a President, they fix on someone else, who is eligible for the office, and who has not yet filled the chair. 2. That they get rid of the platform, the Nomination Committee, together with other evils before described, as peaceably, early, yet resolutely as possible. 3. That they retain, with a firm grasp, the three popular elections they have. 4. That they take the advice of Mr. Wesley, not to render rich men necessary to them. Beware of the lay influence of the rich, which Dr. Bunting has found so necessary to accomplish his purposes of making Methodism something to look at and admire, rather than the grand instrument of converting the world. We have felt it our study to lift up the veil, and to give the brethren a glimpse or two into the arena of Buntonian

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policy: it is for them to watch—to act—to counteract.”

Number Three is occupied with matters somewhat miscellaneous. “RECLAIMED GROUND”—is spoken of, conveying the idea that some desired points had been gained, and alterations made by which certain rights had been secured. Take for example the following statement. “The platform constituted part of the graver deliberations of the brethren; when a resolution was entered into that it should be lowered, and so rendered more accessible, by reducing it nearer to a level with the floor of the house. Accordingly, it was brought down to a level almost with the pew-tops; and the President, instead of being in the centre of a crowd of underlings, had his chair on a projection in the front, with an ex-president on his right, and the secretary on his left,—the other officials retiring, on either hand, to the back part of the elevation, with Doctor Bunting, in a more vacant space in the centre, seated alone, like a speckled bird, some distance in the rear of the presidential chair; somewhat in the position of a servant at the back of his master, and not in front of the platform, as in the year preceding. So much for No. 2. But this, though on the ‘sliding scale,’ is to be accepted but as part payment, for what has been taken away, and not the whole of what is demanded.”

“THE HUNDRED” is also referred to. “Among

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the most unexpected acts of the Conference was the election of Doctor Beaumont into the Hundred. Doctor Newton proposed Mr. Young, whom we regard as the platform nomination. Against his election there could be no objection, except the contemptible reasons urged to secure it; but while the brethren loved and respected him, they were anxious to give a further impetus to the liberal principles that were now making their appearance—accordingly, Mr. Fowler, with a touch of quiet sarcasm, adverted to the argument employed in favour of Mr. Lomas in the preceding year, and intimated that, as the London first circuit had, no doubt, reaped such immense advantage from the fact of its Superintendent becoming a member of the Hundred, the London second would reap the same on the event of the election of Doctor Beaumont, who had been, and still was, its Superintendent. The platform was taken by surprise, and mowed down by a single stroke with its own argument was dumb. A buzz of approbation, combined with hearty laughter in some quarters, went through the brethren on the floor of the house: the tricksters were mortified on being beat with their own weapons, and the more so as they had reason to believe that the ‘Fly Sheets’ had their share of influence in the matter.”

“*Want of Labourers*”—is another of the subjects. There seems to have been a lack of preachers

to fill up the ministerial ranks. Various proposals were submitted to Conference, with a view to meet the pressing want; amongst others, it was recommended that young men should be taken out of the Institution, rather than the work of God should be impeded. "Dr. Beaumont concluded an impassioned burst of eloquence with—'Loose them, and let them go, for the Lord hath need of them.' Doctor Bunting sarcastically replied, 'You may loose the *asses*, and let them go.' Doctor Beaumont here retorted, with his usual quickness and force, saying, 'There is a higher and a lower analogy, and a Christian minister ought never to take the lower when the higher is within his reach.' This pinched, as well it might—the orator being supplied not only with knowledge, but with taste."

On what is expressed as—"THE CORE AND CURE OF MISRULE"—we have these words. "All public bodies are in danger of departing, by little and little, from first principles. It is necessary to keep a most vigilant eye upon the earliest symptoms of deviation from the straight line; and we hope we shall not be charged with undue suspicion for doing this in these papers. From some such departure, insensibly creeping in among us, a good deal of the present uneasiness has arisen."

"FLOATING OPINIONS"—bring up the rear in this "Number." "Much may be collected," it is observed, "from public opinion, either in the way of

discouragement or comfort. The following sentiments and expressions have reached our ears and our eyes, either brought in or transmitted by friends, or casually heard in the social circle, when the parties interested were not suspected to be present. We can filiate the whole as to time, place and person, but forbear; each parent will know his own child, though it may have passed through half a dozen hands on its passage to us;—and of this we are certain, that as to effect, not one will be lost here, whether brought into existence—as they all were—*before, during or after* Conference.”

“It is very extraordinary,” says one to start with, “but these ‘Fly Sheets,’ I find, have been out some time, and I have not heard of them till now, and what is remarkable, they have not once been named in the Book Committee, of which I am a member.”

“This mysterious silence (before and during Conference), bespeaks much.”

“The *exposé* is so complete and crushing, that, I think, the party will not dare to search for the authors, for fear of being held up to the general scorn and execration, by the publication of the ‘Fly Sheets’ to the world, which would be the inevitable result of an attempt to detect and punish.”

Yes, and it was in consequence of this “result” that we obtained the copy now before us, about thirty years since.

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“ There is too much truth in the statements ; but the spirit is bad, and the manner uncourt-  
eous.”

“ The general opinion appears to be that No. 1 of the Physickers is very severe, but sadly too true—that No. 2 is full of excellences, and great hopes are entertained as to the salutary operation, which it is so well calculated to produce.”

“ It is one of the most tremendous attacks that has been made on the party in modern times : the attempt is Lutheran.”

“ How sudden the change ! It is like the shock of an earthquake to the Old Dynasty—like the still small voice to the free and the happy. I hope we shall never use our liberty for a cloak of licentiousness, but by love serve one another.”

“ Nothing appears to escape the authors : they have eyes as searching as fire ; and, as if possessed of Dionysius’ ear-trumpet, they seem to know everything that occurs.”

“ It is desirable that the real Junius should be kept in profound secrecy, as ‘ the powers that be ’ would persecute to death the acknowledged author of their confusion. On this account and also for the sake of the good which will be effected, it is hoped that the author or authors shall ever be the ‘ Great Unknown.’ ”

“ Number 4 ” commences as follows :—“ It is

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a fact to which we refer with great satisfaction, that amid the heavy censures which have fallen on us, no one has dared to say that our *facts* are *fictions*, and that our *reasonings* are *sophisms*. Their truth in the one case, their force in the other, is their power. We have thrown down the gauntlet, we have challenged refutation; for more than two years we have kept the list open. No knight-errant has appeared; no defender of injured virtue and oppressed weakness has lifted his lance against us. Restless anxiety there has been to discover the authors: and threats of actions of law on their detection; and prying investigation into, and comparison of type and execution; and great swelling words in the forum; and un-English gagging bills, to be followed, if good luck would have it, by heavy pains and penalties. But refutation there has been none attempted—for the most weighty of reasons—*no refutation was possible*.

Most sincerely do we wish that there had been no personalities in our ‘Fly Sheets.’ But this was impossible. We must have abandoned our object altogether, had we resolved to give no pain to any one individual. The men were implicated in the measures;—the abettors were the very life and soul of the system. No weapon could reach *it* without piercing *them*. This was our *misfortune*, but their *fault*. We saw a system of misrule in our body, growing into vast power and giant proportions,

producing disunion, disaffection, discord, murmurings, altercations, heart-burnings—and threatening the ruin of a system of truth and holiness, to which we are indebted for, and to which we have devoted our whole. Our mind was made up. War with this system of misrule we vowed—a war of extermination—a war in which no quarter would be given. We have resolved to write it down: we know that we can. Our shot hits. Our opponents cannot conceal the fact, and some of them have been known to acknowledge it. Our blows, though aimed directly at the system, strike hard on a few individuals. We cannot help, though we deeply regret it. They have placed themselves in a false position—in the fore-front—and when our lusty yeomen let fly clouds of arrows from their trusty long-bows, the van are the first wounded. This is one of the sad and stern necessities of the righteous war in which we are engaged: and to which, whoever cries out ‘wounded!’ we shall stand staunch till the field is clear and the Conference free.

We proceed with our work, and remind our readers of what we have already done.” In a long enumeration this appears, “We have shown that the Stationing Committee deserves the appellation we have given it,—‘THE SLAUGHTER HOUSE OF MINISTERIAL CHARACTER.’ Where character is assassinated, and years elapse before the man


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knows that the bowie-knife has been plunged into it. Whatever misgivings some persons might have of the lawfulness of the 'Fly Sheet' system, no such misgivings could harass the judgment of men, who, in the Stationing Committee, have done their brethren the most cruel wrong, and have not only kept themselves under cover, but have taken care that it should not be known to the injured party, what insidious and vile efforts have been employed against them."

After describing various "*Triumphs and signs of progress*," it is said, "These, to us, are cheering symptoms that our labours are succeeding. We shall soon be able to say, as the Frenchman said, on the top of a coach: 'Mister Shir, dat koatch vich was *first* by and by, is *now behind* vary!'

We have carried our mining operations under the whole basis of the citadel of misrule. Several explosions have taken place. A few others will follow; and a heap of ruins will be all remaining of the great Babylon, which 'The Great I' has made. Guizot falls with his master. The adopted successor of Bunting, like Napoleon's son, will never ascend to the throne of the empire. The dynasty ends in the Corsican. The empire, as it rose with him, falls with him. And the day is not far distant either."

No. 5, the last Number, begins with the motto which follows—

## RESURREXI.

*“ Quid te exempta juvat spines e pluribus trium ? ”*

JUVENAL.

## TRANSLATION.

Three thorns you have removed, but what can that betide,  
While many sharp as they are left still rankling in your side ?

PETER PRICK'EM.

“ We commenced our No. 4, with the motto RESURGAM—true to our promise, we now say RESURREXI. We ended our last by saying to the adherents of the system condemned in these pages, ‘ Bluster, rage, whine, tyrannise as ye may, we say “ put down ” the Fly Sheets ye cannot, and lay them down we will not, until your system of misrule, partiality, and selfishness is laid low, and numbered amongst the things that once were.’ We, therefore, resume our pen ; for in spite of the Holy Inquisition, with its brotherly questions, with its censures, degradations, and expulsions, we have escaped unscathed. We could imagine it possible of no other body than the ‘ venerable and AUGUST assembly ’ that it should be concluded because James Everett, Samuel Dunn, William Griffith, Junr., had in the words of the Minutes of the Conference ‘ ceased to travel,’ that therefore, the ‘ Fly Sheets ’ would cease to appear. For anything that is proved to the contrary by the late proceedings of Conference, there may at least be more than thirty writers of the ‘ Fly Sheets ’ left.”

The “writers” next proceed to speak in terms of disapproval of what are called “*Endowments*.” Instance one. “In reference to the Institution, we ask whether it justifies so large an amount of yearly expense? What do the people get for an outlay of nearly £4,500 per annum? Are the preachers brought up there a superior class of ministers, either for pulpit talent, or for usefulness, when compared with men who have not been so trained? We think not. And have not some of the students expressed their surprise that they have been able to retain their spirituality under the deadening influence of such monkery? We know they have. If there is a formality and a want of earnestness in the generality of the men who have been through the training of our Institution, we would ask, is it likely they will be improved in these respects by Brother Crowther? We have heard of a worthy gentleman who went to hear this good brother one evening, and towards the close of the sermon, so monotonous and wearisome had it become, that our friend, thinking it must be bedtime, actually unbuttoned his gaiters, let them down, and began to unwind his garters, till the friendly nudge of a person beside him, reminded him that he was listening to the eloquence of an incipient Professor.”

We feel bound to say that the conduct of the “worthy gentleman” was not very creditable either

to his intelligence or manners. We knew the "good brother" referred to, now deceased, heard him preach many years ago during a Conference that was held in Sheffield, and always regarded him as an able, excellent minister.

"WANT OF MORAL COURAGE" is likewise spoken of and it is remarked that—"One of the greatest wants in the present race of Wesleyan Ministers is moral courage—a courage that shall enable a man to stand by what he regards the cause of truth, in spite of the platform remarks, and the possibility of his being exiled to some nook in Cornwall or doomed to live on oat cakes and oat porridge in the Orkneys or Hebrides. So rank is the tyranny, and so humiliating this 'house of bondage,' that when Timothy Ingle on one occasion dared to vote against a platform motion, 'all the disciples forsook him and fled.' On which Doctor Bunting fired off a tremendous volley about minorities of one, and brethren ought to think conscientiously, etc. For one brief moment, courage fired the eye of Timothy, and nerved his arm, and mounting a form, he said, 'I do think as conscientiously as Doctor Bunting does, and it is therefore that I oppose the measure; but—but—but—a—but I withdraw my opposing vote.' Since last Conference how many of the brethren are shielding themselves from the public indignation occasioned by the expulsions, by saying, 'I never held up my hand for these acts of disci-

pline.' Why did they not? Because they disapproved of them. Why then did they not lift their hand against them? Because they dare not.

Their love of appearing unanimous in their decisions has been fostered till self-dependence and independent thought and action are given up. Mr. Rattenbury is not the only one who is ready, at the request of the President, to move or second a resolution which may be unpalatable to him.\* Perhaps this subserviency cannot be better illustrated than by the following; which will be remembered by many brethren who were present. At a time when there was no motion before 'the house,' S. D. Waddy saw Barnard Slater asleep, wearied with his attendance 'on so many important Committees.' Walking up to him, and suddenly awaking him, Mr. Waddy said, 'Brother Slater, the President calls on you to second Dr. Bunting's motion.' Without any enquiry, brother Barnard rising, said, 'I beg leave to second the motion!' On this S. D. Waddy walked out, leaving it to the chair to inform Barnard there was no motion before the house, which was convulsed with laughter."

"We know not," says the closing paragraph, "what may be the proceedings of next Conference in reference to our discovery, and identification. Perhaps while we write, the officers of the Holy

\* He was a blessed man notwithstanding, and wise to win *many* souls; who are *now* the "joy and crown of his rejoicing."

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Inquisition may be preparing new instruments of torture: but our mind is made up. We know not that we shall visit the next Conference, for we are wearied with the exhibition of priestly domination. We are sick of seeing the English language sifted of every laudatory adjective with which to decorate their vote of thanks to each other: we loathe the recollection of the grossest partiality that was ever exhibited by a chairman receiving the warmest thanks of the brotherhood, who, not content with this, have canonized the man before his death—‘the saintly President;’ and we are disgusted with the exhibitions of the Fugle-man, * Dr. Newton, who, though he clamours none down himself, yet with his significant shake of the head—his upraised eyes, as in surprise and horror—and with his half-raised hands—he gives the signs to the young brethren just escaped from being ‘ordinary tradesmen,’ who are ready, as the case may be, ‘to applaud to the echo,’ or to clamour down with expressions of unmitigated disgust. We do not cite examples of this: the thing is too notorious to be denied by the Doctor’s own partisans. He has done it till it has become a habit,—and while nearly every member of the last Conference witnessed it, he had the forgetfulness or the hardihood to deny it, when it was

* He was a man whom the Master delighted to honour. In labours more abundant, he blew the Gospel trumpet with blessed effect and to the delight of very many—for more than half a century.

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objected to by Mr. Dunn. We say we are prepared for his nods and shakes, and lowering scowls. We are prepared for the impertinence of Wesley Thomas, for the petulance of Peter Duncan, for the mock gravity of Dr. Hannah and William Naylor—and hardest task of all, for the silent witnessing of such exhibitions by Dr. Dixon without his testifying to their iniquity. We are prepared for all this; and also for the brotherly question, ‘Are you the Author of the “Fly Sheets?”’ and our reply to this enquiry will be, ‘Oh, Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter; nor will we worship the image thou hast set up.’”

We have completed, for the present, our extracts from these wonderful productions. Only a small portion, in comparison of what they contain, has been given; but yet sufficient for our purpose, and as much as our space would allow. For descriptive power, incisive effect, scathing sarcasm, withering rebuke, and literary ability, we never expect to look upon their like again. We are of decided opinion, however, that unmerited, unjust odium was cast on Dr. Bunting. If he was sometimes arbitrary and despotic in his conduct, in this he was equalled, if not surpassed, by others of his brethren; and it is just possible that the writers of the “Fly Sheets” may have been amongst the number! We knew the Doctor, have been with him in Committee, and marked his spirit and general bearing as far as

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we were able. To admit that he had faults, which we must do, is only to say that he was but human. If it is true that he introduced, or was the means of introducing, certain elements into the polity or administration of Methodism, that were not calculated to conserve its best interests, it is equally true that for more than fifty years he rendered an immense amount of valuable service to Methodism. This should not be forgotten, and it will not be forgotten.

Turning again to the "Fly Sheets," fidelity compels us to aver that, in our judgment at least, their author, or authors, derived not a little of their inspiration from jealous envy and disappointed ambition. But then, it will be remembered, this is only *one* development of *one* infirmity belonging alas! to our common humanity. Let us, therefore, endeavour to throw over this infirmity the beautiful mantle of that "Charity which suffereth long and is kind."



## CHAPTER VI.

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FROM 1847 TO 1849.

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MARK we now the gathering clouds portending the coming storm. The circulation of the Fly Sheets, at first *confined* to the preachers, do not appear to have produced in their minds all the effect intended and desired. Although filled with astonishment they were not roused to action, in the way it was expected they would be. If, as was alleged, they were in chains they do not seem to have felt the bondage, and, therefore, sighed not for deliverance. Vexed and disappointed at this, the writers thus complained,—“ The reforms advocated in our previous numbers are now taken up by the people, and this our Number 5, we place at once in the hands of a publisher—for why should we waste our postage in sending them to men who, nineteen out of twenty, will admit to you privately that they approve of the reforms we advocate; yet in the

presence of the platform are as mute as a fish, and at the nod of the dictator, would lend themselves to crucify a man merely suspected of being the author? We turn to the people, as the sunflower turns to the orb of day, for we see through them we can secure the reforms in our body, more readily than by addressing ourselves to the brethren solely." In other quarters, however, effect *was* produced—unmistakable effect. Those who had received such marked and special attention in these offensive publications, were filled with wrathful indignation, and resolved, if possible, to detect and punish the authors. Their evident consternation and alarm reminds one of a record in "Parliamentary History," vol. 19, page 92. This record, which shows there were Fly Sheet writers even in the days of the Commonwealth, is as follows:—"The Commons being informed of a Pamphlet lately printed, called '*The Second Part of England's new Chains discovered,*' and the same being read, they resolved, 'That it contained much false, scandalous, and reproachful matter; was highly seditious, and destructive to the present Government, as now declared and settled by Parliament; that it tended to Division and Mutiny in the Army; to the raising of a new War in the Commonwealth; to the hindering the present Relief of *Ireland*, and to the continuing of Free-quarter.' The House also declared, 'That the Authors, Contrivers, and

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Framers of the said Paper were guilty of High Treason, and should be proceeded against as Traitors : That all persons whatsoever, who should join with, or adhere unto, and hereafter voluntarily aid or assist, the Authors, Framers, and Contrivers of the aforesaid Paper, in the prosecution thereof, should be esteemed Traitors to the Commonwealth; and be proceeded against accordingly.' And this Declaration was ordered to be forthwith printed, published, and proclaimed under the direction of the Council of State ; to whom it was referred to find out and examine who were the Authors, Contrivers, and Framers, printers and publishers of the said Pamphlet, and to proceed therein as they should think just and necessary, for preventing Tumults, and for preserving the peace of the Commonwealth."

As to authorship of the Fly Sheets, we have almost as little doubt as we have of our own existence ! In all probability *several* persons were actively engaged in furnishing materials for the building ; but one master hand laid the foundation of the fabric, and in due time brought it to completion. It is likely enough that Conference took a similar view of the case ; but to get at proof *absolute*, proof *demonstrative*, was a *sorely* perplexing difficulty. Still, attempts were made to grapple with this difficulty and to overcome it. After different suggestions, some feasible, others im-

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practicable, it was decided that a "Declaration" should be prepared which the preachers, with some obvious exceptions, should be asked to sign. It is more than questionable whether, in the first instance, this course received the official sanction of the Conference itself; it was, however, adopted and *persevered* in. The Declaration was to this effect,—  
"We, the undersigned, agree to declare that we regard with indignation and abhorrence, the anonymous attacks on the motives and characters of our brethren that have recently appeared in certain clandestine publications; that we have never intentionally communicated with the authors of those publications, with a view to afford information or assistance; and that we will not allow their wicked slanders to detract from the esteem and confidence we feel towards those against whom such attacks are directed."

As might have been confidently anticipated, this document signally failed to answer its intended design. While nearly all the preachers, after repeated importunity, appended their names, some refused to do so. Several gave their reasons for this in the presence of the Conference assembly. "Doctor Beaumont, Joseph Fowler, Samuel Dunn, distinguished themselves by the noble manner in which they denounced this inquisitorial attempt. 'I am called to declare that the Fly Sheets are wicked lies. I cannot: for it is well known that

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many of the sentiments therein have been mine for years,' was the open avowal of Fowler. 'If you send me to Shetland for refusing to sign this declaration, I am ready to brave its seas and its tempests, but I will never be a party to the establishment of an inquisition,' said the independent, and long persecuted, but laborious Dunn."

In reference to this "Declaration" it was farther remarked,—“It has not accomplished its only object. It has not fixed the authorship. The hoped-for prey has escaped. The hunted victims are at large. It was an awkward attempt to bag them ; they are still on the wing.

This unskilfulness reminds us of an incident recorded in the Life of Sir T. F. Buxton. A well known professor was visiting at Holkham. Though he had never had a gun in his hand he accompanied the shooting party, Mr. Coke taking care to put him in a corner of the covert, where, it was thought, the other sportsmen would be out of his reach. When they came up to the spot where he was, Mr. Coke said, 'Well ! what sport ? You have been firing pretty often !' 'Hush !' said the Doctor, 'there it goes again ;' and he was just raising his gun to his shoulder, when a man walked very quietly from the bushes in front of him. It was one of the beaters, whose leather gaiters had been mistaken for a hare by the pro-

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fessor, who much surprised by its tenacity of life had been firing at it whenever he saw it move. 'But,' said Mr. Buxton, 'the man had never discovered that the professor was shooting at him.'"

It was next determined that several of those most suspected should be brought to the bar of Conference, and while there put to the question. One of the first *sent* for was JAMES EVERETT, to whom the summons was thus addressed:—

“ Wesleyan Conference, Manchester,  
27th July, 1849.

“DEAR BROTHER—The Conference having judged it expedient, previously to its entering on the usual enquiries into ministerial character, to have it distinctly understood, that the principle reasserted by the Conference of 1835, in regard to such enquiries, shall still be acted upon, in any and every case in which it may be deemed necessary or expedient; and certain members of the Conference having intimated that there are questions on subjects now deeply affecting the harmony of the Connexion, which they are prepared to move that you shall be required to answer when your name shall be called over,—

You are hereby required to attend, as early as possible, for the purpose of answering, in person, such enquiries as the Conference, in the exercise of

its discretion, may deem it proper to propose to you on the subject in question.

On behalf of the Conference, we are, dear Brother,

Yours affectionately,

THOMAS JACKSON, *President*;

JOHN HANNAH, *Secretary*.

To the Rev. James Everett,  
York.

Accompanied by Mr. Burdsall, who had also been sent for, Mr. Everett repaired to the scene of trial, which took place shortly after his arrival in Manchester.

“As soon as his name was announced he left his seat and with a hurried, yet firm step, placed himself in front of the platform, on which it was doubtful whether there was a single person by whom his case had not been prejudged, and who would not have been as glad of his condemnation as his acquittal. Be that as it may, there was fire in his eye, and purpose evidently in his heart, as he proceeded, unblanched, to his position. His attitude, in the esteem of some, when standing before the confessional, was one which he occasionally assumes on the platform. How different the scene! The walls of that house, (Oldham Street Chapel) in his more palmy days, both on the platform and in the pulpit, had often resounded

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to the intonations of his comparatively powerful and varied voice to immense congregations. He was now at the bar, not on the throne; but even there his voice was clear, elevated, occasionally vehement; there was nothing timid in his manner; his action, indeed, sometimes approached to the violent; he was decisive, energetic, and once or twice impassioned, meeting the learned Doctor—Hannah, the Secretary—with considerable adroitness at almost every turn. The conflict was short, abrupt and graphic.

Mr. Everett wished to know—prompted to the inquiry, no doubt, by the announcement made in the morning, and the formal manner in which the business was conducted—whether, in the absence of everything of the kind in the District Minutes, a charge was involved in the inquiry? ‘Oh no,’ it was only a ‘friendly inquiry.’ He was desirous of ascertaining, in the next place, whether a man might be exposed, by that inquiry, to criminate himself? His object here, as the Doctor spoke of a series of questions, was evidently that of strangling, by the first grasp, the monster question which he foresaw was about to steal into notice. But it was still, ‘Oh no;’ no charge; the Conference only wished to give him an opportunity of setting himself right, and standing fair with his brethren. Mr. Everett, again pressing the Doctor as to the precise nature and object of the inquiry, ventured


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to ask whether it referred to the 'Ministerial Declaration,' which he had not signed,—further stating, that he never would sign it ; when the Doctor affected something like surprise, on being asked such a question, as the 'Declaration' had not been named by him ; and after a momentary pause, told him, as if goaded by the question, that the inquiry referred to a certain publication, entitled 'Fly Sheets.' Mr. Everett then inquired, why the Doctor did not give notice of the nature and object of the inquiry in the morning ? The Doctor and his friends stated, that he gave distinct notice of *inquiry*, which Mr. Everett admitted ; but the latter, unwilling to allow them to escape from the rule which requires that *notice* of the *nature* of a charge should be previously given, reminded them, that there was a difference between an *inquiry* and its object, and insisted, that neither the *nature* nor the *object* had been alluded to till then. But here, the distinction between an *inquiry* and a *charge* stepped in to the Doctor's relief, though it was well known that the prime, nay, the only object, in each case, was the same. Mr. Everett, as 'friendly inquiry' was allowed on one side, seemed to think that it ought to be indulged on the other, and, therefore, proceeded to ask in the next place, why his interlocutor had not taken the districts in order—passing over all others, in order at once to come to York ? And why, in the

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York District, he had invidiously selected him as the first object of whom inquiry was to be made, when Mr. Burdsall, who was to pass through a similar process, was his senior? This question produced something like embarrassment, as well as suspense. After screwing himself up to a certain amount of noble daring, the Doctor, with greater vehemence, said, 'I take you first, because general suspicion has fallen upon you as the chief writer of the "Fly Sheets."' Mr. Everett replied, 'If authorship is your object, I have no answer to give to your question, yea or nay;' adding, 'I know the feeling that has been excited, and now exists, in this Conference, against me—a feeling that disqualifies the brethren for judging.' 'That,' said the Doctor, 'affects the motives of the brethren, and you have no right to impute improper motives to them.' Mr. Everett asked, with his usual quickness, 'What interpretation am I to put upon the motives of men who fill the public mind with prejudice against me; and then, with a view to get me to criminate myself, turn a Wesleyan Conference into an inquisition? You shall have no answer to the question from me, at the risk of expulsion from the Connexion. My mind is made up. If you have any charge to prefer against me, show me my *accusers*—let them *adduce* their *evidence*, and I pledge myself to meet them.' Here was another pause; when at length the question which stood at

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the head of the written bead-roll in the Doctor's hand, to give an air of legality to it, was formally put—'Brother James Everett, are you the writer, in part or in all, of a certain publication called Fly Sheets?' Mr. Everett, with firmness, clearness, and emphasis, replied, 'I will not answer that question for reasons before assigned. I know the temper of this Conference. An answer shall never be extorted from me!'

Next, the venerable John Burdsall, who had preached the gospel for more than half a century—a lovely picture of old age, bending beneath a weight of years,—a man of peace, extensively useful while in the itinerant work, highly respected in every circuit in which he had been stationed, and so highly honoured by his brethren, as to have conferred upon him the office of General Secretary of the Missionary Society, in companionship with the celebrated Richard Watson, in the early days of that society, and long before a breath of censure had escaped from the lips of any one in reference to its transactions ;—yes, the venerable, apostolic Burdsall was next called to answer the odious, insulting question. On its introduction, he wished to know whether any charge was entered against him on the District Minutes? None: it was only a 'friendly inquiry!' He wished to know, in the next place, whether, mixed up with this inquiry, anything had transpired since the District Meeting

to render him culpable now that he stood before the Conference? Nothing was alleged to have occurred. He put to the brethren, in the way of challenge or appeal, whether any of them knew anything against him on the ground of doctrine, discipline, moral, religious, or ministerial character? and if so to declare it openly. The answer was still in the negative: on these grounds, he stood fair with the brethren and with the public. On these grounds, he stated, he begged to be examined, as on these grounds, as a Wesleyan minister, he was responsible to his brethren; and on no other ground would he suffer himself to be questioned: adding, 'I entered the body without such tests as the one now proposed; I closed my itinerant life without being subjected to such tests: it is now too late in life with me to begin with them; as I have lived without them, I intend to die without them.' The question being formally put, he refused, in a decisive tone, to answer; demanding if any one had any charge to prefer against him, to show him his *accusers* and the evidence they had to offer,—boldly pledging himself, with Mr. Everett, to meet his accusers at any time and in any place. These two men, who had thus bearded the lion, and braved the tempest raised against them in the largest Wesleyan Conference that ever had assembled, when the tide of tory influence was at the highest, and tyranny itself was rampant,—these two men were

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requested for the first time in their lives to leave the Conference—a Conference in which the one had been entitled to sit between forty and fifty, and the other between fifty and sixty years. The two brethren withdrew, after having dashed from their lips a cup which was charged with a potion too bitter to swallow, pleased with a consciousness that, whatever might follow, they had done their utmost to prevent the establishment of an INQUISITION among the ‘holy fathers’ of the Wesleyan body.”

Shortly after this Messrs. S. Dunn and W. Griffith were brought to trial, but as the process and results were similar to what has just been described we need not repeat them. The case of Mr. Bromley, however, was somewhat different to the rest and requires more particular notice. He was not at the Conference at its commencement but was summoned to attend. His letter in reply, addressed to the President, is well worthy of a place in this history.

“Walcott Chapel House, Bath,
30th July, 1849.

“REVEREND SIR,—Your communication reached me yesterday (Sunday) morning, just as I was leaving home to take the pulpit in New King-street chapel. Strange preparation for that momentous service !

Not having received notice of any charges to

be preferred against me at the time my name occurs in the Conference examination, and knowing that the rule of 1792, repeated in 1807, required that notice of *all* charges, with the name of the accuser or accusers, shall *precede* inquiry into their truth, I regard the summons you have sent me, to appear before the Conference now sitting, upon a question of character, as arbitrary, illegal and unjust.

If I understand the letter forwarded to me aright, I am called to Conference to answer certain interrogatories to be proposed to me under the provisions of the law found at page 112 of the Minutes of 1835 ; though, as to what those interrogatories are and by whom they are to be proposed, I am left utterly in the dark. I trouble you, therefore, Mr. President, with this letter, distinctly to aver, that any questions put to me under the provisions of that law, I cannot, and will not, answer. To assent to that law in any shape were to renounce the vows and obligations which I contracted when I became a Wesleyan minister, to deride and condemn our standard writings, and to fly in the face of the word and authority of the Son of God. The 'errors, ignorances and offences' of my Christian and ministerial character are alas ! manifold ; but I am not prepared to *do this great wickedness and sin against God*. It is a question of submission to the Conference, or to the word and majesty of the Son of God : and I prefer the latter. If for a moment

I incline to submit in this instance to a body of men whom I have served faithfully in the gospel for thirty-seven years, I hear those words spoken to my heart, as it were in thunders of remonstrance, 'Whosoever shall be ashamed of Me, and of My words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed when He cometh in the glory of His Father, with the holy angels.' This is my testimony, by which, with the assistance of Him whose word I thus revere, I am prepared, under any extremity, to abide.

If, however, the Conference prefer that I shall deliver this my testimony (and no other testimony have I to deliver,) in person before its assembly, I will endeavour to do so, God being my helper.

But to enable me to do this, I have a request to make. I am without the means of travelling to Manchester. For thirty-seven years I have aided, in my capacity as a Wesleyan minister, to sustain the Contingent Fund. I hope, therefore, it is not too much to ask, that the Conference will, in this emergency, instruct the Treasurer of the Contingent Fund to remit me the sum requisite for my expenses to and from Manchester.

I must also take permission to remind you, Mr. President, that I cannot very well, when in Manchester, lodge in the streets, and that, therefore, it is proper that lodgings should be provided for me, and that I should be made acquainted with them.

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If, in addition to these things, you will acquaint me with the *day* and *hour* when the Conference will receive my testimony, I will endeavour to appear and give it. I say MY TESTIMONY—for to answer interrogatories proposed to me under the provisions of the unholy and Popish law of 1835, is what, God being my helper, I will never do!

And now, Mr. President, I charge it upon your personal honour and presidential integrity, that this letter be openly and distinctly read to the Conference.

I remain, Rev. Sir,

Respectfully and sincerely yours,

JAMES BROMLEY."

"The reading of the letter produced, from time to time, vociferous expressions of disapprobation and abhorrence.

Another letter, peremptorily requiring Mr. Bromley's attendance, stating that he would be questioned respecting his suspected connection with publication of the 'Fly Sheets Vindicated,' and assuring him that his expenses would be paid, was ordered to be sent to him."

In due time Mr. Bromley appeared in Conference.

"Before the President called him from his seat, Mr. Harris rose and said, he had a statement to make that would relieve the Conference of all



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difficulty with Mr. Bromley. A friend of his had told him and Mr. West, that Mr. Bromley had, in private, denied to this gentleman any knowledge of the authors of the 'Fly Sheets,' that he disliked their matter and spirit, and that any productions of his which had appeared in them, or in the 'Fly Sheets Vindicated,' had been introduced without his knowledge and consent. Mr. Harris further stated that Mr. Bromley had admitted the substantial truth of this occurrence in a conversation with himself and Mr. West, and he hoped this would be satisfactory to the Conference.

Dr. Bunting inquired why, if Mr. Bromley had said this in private, he could not say as much before the Conference? He ought to do so. The President accordingly summoned him to the bar, and asked him whether he had any communication to make on this subject?

Mr. Bromley, in a very decided and impressive manner, replied, 'I have no communication to make on the subject.'

The President: 'Are you willing to say you had this conversation?'

Mr. Bromley: 'I have no answer to give to this question.'

To another question Mr. Bromley replied, that the mode of proceeding was un-Christian and un-English.

Mr. West then inquired whether Mr. Bromley

would not admit that he had such a conversation with him.

Mr. Bromley : ‘ I have no answer to make.’

Mr. Harris put the same question.

Mr. Bromley : ‘ I have no answer to give to this question.’

Mr. Rigg, his superintendent, intreated him and implored him to answer.

The President several times renewed the inquiry; and at length put the question—‘ Are you the author or writer of the Fly Sheets ?’

Each inquiry elicited precisely the same reply, and, in the same decisive tone, ‘ I have no answer to give you, Mr. President, or to this Conference, on any subject under the sanction of the law of 1835;’ adding, at length, ‘ I am prepared to assign my reasons when you are prepared to hear them.’

The President presumed the Conference was not going to submit its laws to discussion. ‘ You have rejected our system of discipline. To put friendly questions has always been our usage. From the beginning, Conference has asserted its right to put any question to any of its members.’

Mr. Bromley : ‘ From the beginning it has been the right of every member of the Conference to withhold an answer.’

A discussion on the first Minutes that ever

were issued was terminated by Mr. Bromley saying, with much earnestness, 'I have no answer to give, and I will give none ! '

The President said that about the middle of the last century some preachers arose, charging the Conference with oppression, when Mr. Wesley said to them: 'I will not interfere with your conscience, and you shall not interfere with mine.' This part of our discipline (putting any question that the Conference pleases to a preacher) must be maintained, not rashly, not unkindly; but in an emergency, where secret sin is committed, that the Conference may purge out the old leaven.

Mr. Bromley: 'In no emergency may you set aside the law of God.'

The President suggested that the Minutes recorded in the Journals of 1835, respecting Mr. Bromley's conduct in the Warrenite agitation, should be read.

Mr. Bromley: 'I concur in the suggestion.'

They were accordingly read by the Secretary, as well as the Minutes from the several districts in which, from year to year, Mr. Bromley has protested against this law.

The President: 'Mr. Bromley, in 1835 you promised the Conference to forego all declarations on the subject; but you have from time to time forced your sentiments on the brethren. Have you any explanation to give for violating your

pledge, and endeavouring to unsettle the minds of the junior brethren? ’

Mr. Bromley: ‘The declaratory act was passed posteriorly to the pledge which I gave to the Conference. I never can consent to submit to the law of 1835—a law so false in its statements, and so wicked in its principles.’

Here the President rose again to protect Conference. The discussion ended; and the Committee originally appointed to consider the case of Mr. Everett was requested to report upon the cases of Messrs. George, Griffith, Dunn, and Bromley.”

With our knowledge of the brethren who stood at the bar of Conference, we do not marvel that in the absence of accuser, charge, or evidence, they persistently refused to answer any question touching the authorship of the Fly Sheets.

In Cromwell’s wars with the Royalists, when any man of distinction in the enemy’s ranks was taken captive and doomed to death, he was allowed the *privilege* of choosing his executioner. On one occasion, a certain distinguished Earl, who had been pursued and captured, was asked to make *his* choice. “I shall make no choice at all,” said he; “if they cannot find a man to *cut my head off*, then let it stop on!” And so it was, as regards the *principle* of it, in each case before us. By their conduct each of these men said—You, the Conference, want to convict me of a certain crime or

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offence of which I am suspected, with a view to punishment: well, if you can, do so; but I shall not help you in the matter; I shall do nothing that might tend to criminate myself, and if you cannot, by clear and satisfactory evidence, prove me guilty, then, in simple justice, let me be accounted and treated as innocent. And for a course so reasonable, a precedent, on high authority, can be found. In his "History of England," Macaulay cites the instance thus:—"On the evening of the eighth of June, the seven prelates, furnished by the ablest lawyers in England with full advice, repaired to the palace, and were called into the Council Chamber. Their petition was lying on the table. The Chancellor took the paper up, showed it to the archbishop, and said, 'Is this the paper which your grace wrote, and which the six bishops present delivered to his Majesty?' Sancroft, the archbishop, looked at the paper, turned to the king, and spoke thus: 'Sir, I stand here a culprit. I never was so before. Once I little thought I ever should be so. Least of all, could I think that I should be charged with any offence against my king; but since I am so unhappy as to be in this situation, your Majesty will not be offended if I avail myself of my lawful right to decline saying anything which may criminate me.' 'This is mere chicanery,' said the king; 'I hope your grace will not do so ill a thing as to deny your own hand?' 'Sir,' said

Lloyd, whose studies had been much among the Casuists, 'all divines agree, that a person situated as we are, may refuse to answer such a question.' The king, as slow of understanding as quick of temper, could not comprehend what the prelates meant. He persisted, and was evidently becoming very angry. 'Sir,' said the archbishop, '*I am not bound to accuse myself!*'"

"On Monday, August 6th, the Committee appointed to consider the case of Messrs. Everett and Burdsall presented its report; which having been read, the following Resolutions were submitted for the adoption of the Conference :—

1st. That considering, that in its own conscientious judgment, and in the expressed opinion of many of our judicious people, a decisive check ought immediately to be given to the wicked, agitating, and divisive proceedings which have lately been pursued, by the publication of the 'Fly Sheets,' as well as of other kindred productions; and considering, also, that when Mr. Everett had the fairest opportunity afforded to him, by the Conference, of *purging himself* from the strong and generally prevalent *suspicion* of his being a partaker in such proceedings, he *contumaciously* refused to do it, the Conference feels it now to be its painful, but imperative duty, to '*expel and put out*' Mr. James Everett 'from being a member' of the Conference, 'or from being in connection therewith;'

but accompanies this act of necessary discipline with the hope and prayer, that it may please God to bring him to a better mind, and guide him to a different course of action.

2nd. That with respect to John Burdsall, it is with unaffected grief that the Conference heard his refusal *to answer the question* which has now been propounded to him—a refusal which the Conference must strongly censure and condemn. But taking into consideration Mr. Burdsall's *former character and services*, his *advanced age*, and the *mental and physical weakness* which he himself pleads, the Conference refrains from any further exercise of discipline in his case; yet earnestly and affectionately admonishes him to abstain from all divisive proceedings, and to DISCONNECT HIMSELF FROM THOSE BY WHOM such proceedings are carried on and encouraged."

In his famous letter addressed to Lord John Russell, Mr. William Martin thus writes,—

"I blush to be compelled to bring before your Lordship's attention such a specimen of defamation and fanaticism, as is exhibited in these resolutions. After a short discussion upon them, they were passed with only three or four dissentients; and Mr. Everett was thrown overboard into a tempestuous sea, to sink or swim as best he could. His cruel and remorseless persecutors, not content with deposing him from the ministry, and turning him

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adrift upon the world without a shilling, have ever since tried to defame his character by the clumsiest inventions and the vilest forgeries, got up for the purpose of depriving him of the sympathy and succour of his friends in the hour of his tribulation and necessity. They have represented him as a man utterly destitute of piety or principle; as an enemy to religion, to order, and to Methodism. The remembrance of this black ingratitude excites my deepest astonishment. Well might Mr. Everett exclaim, with honest indignation, when defending himself in Exeter Hall from these unfounded calumnies:—

‘An enemy to Methodism! after I have given to it forty-three years of the best of my strength, and the best part of my life. An enemy to Methodism! and have saved its Book-room from the effects of a pirated edition of Fletcher’s Works, and from the ill effects of a stereotyped edition of the Hymn-book. An enemy to Methodism! I have defended its Founder, its doctrines, its discipline, and its worship, against the “Anti-Jacobin Review,” against “The British Critic,” against the Rev. Latham Wainwright, against the Curate of Cawthorne; against Dr. Southey, in “The Correspondent;” in my biographies of Hick, the Village Blacksmith, of the Wallsend Miner, of Daniel Isaac, of William Dawson, and of the ever-to-be-admired Dr. Adam Clarke; who, together with



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Daniel Isaac, on some occasions, received as little respect from the same party as James Everett has received of either justice or mercy. An enemy to Methodism ! and yet the defender of it in my histories of Methodism in Sheffield and Manchester and their vicinities. An enemy to Methodism ! and yet have given the profits of 3,000 copies of "The Village Blacksmith" to the Preachers' Fund—£200 of which was paid into the hands of the Treasurer of that fund—a fund from the benefit of which I am to be for ever cut off. An enemy to Methodism ! and yet, within the last three years, in the midst of much pain and much affliction, I have travelled between 27,000 and 28,000 miles to enrich its funds with collections, and to bless its people with sermons, according to the best of my ability. No, I am no enemy to Methodism.' "

Messrs. Dunn and Griffith were disposed of in a similar way to what their brother Everett had been. In the course of the year Mr. Bromley was suspended for what were considered illegal proceedings, and at the ensuing Conference expelled. By earnest appeals and forcible words these acts were eloquently opposed by Dr. Beaumont and other ministers, who, fidelity requires us to say, were listened to with the greatest impatience and treated with contemptuous scorn.

We could give particulars as to how the Conference dealt with Messrs. Walton, Rowland,

George, and others; but as such accounts would revive recollections in the minds of many, which would be productive of less of pleasure than of pain, we shall for the present omit them.

CHAPTER VII.

FROM 1849 TO 1852.

THE reader has beheld the “delinquents,” as they were called, at the bar of Conference and become acquainted with the fact, as well as circumstances, of their dismissal from its ranks. But the scene changes. There is another bar, that of public opinion; to this the Conference was brought, and compelled, however unwilling, to abide its scrutiny.

It is generally thought that the verdict of public opinion is in most, if not all cases, according to the rules of equity and justice. How far it was so, in the present instance, each one must be left to judge for himself. The expulsions were immediately followed by intense and wide-spread commotion; nor is this at all surprising, when it is considered that the doings of Conference involved the most important principles, in relation to the prerogatives and powers of church rulers, the liberties and rights of church members—a church too, not inferior in the tribes of spiritual Israel, but amongst the largest and most influential churches

in Christendom. The feeling evoked was not confined to the Wesleyan societies or congregations, it affected other communities also ; and, indeed, many who belonged to no religious community at all. Many circuits in the Connexion condemned the Conference's "acts of discipline," and expressed sincere sympathy with the expelled ministers, and especially with Mr. Everett. Take York as an example.

"The Wesleyan Societies in York, both in the city and in the country, were highly excited. A Public Meeting was held, August 10th, 1849, and the following resolutions unanimously adopted:—

I. That this meeting deeply deplores the recent act of the Conference, in the expulsion of the Rev. James Everett from the Wesleyan Community.

II. That the Rev. James Everett is hereby affectionately assured of our Christian and heartfelt sympathy, under his present trying and painful circumstances.

III. That a fund be forthwith raised to purchase an annuity for the Rev. James Everett, to supply the loss which he will sustain by being cut off from the various funds of the Connexion ; thus, at once, affording a substantial proof of the high estimation entertained of his unblemished character, and his long-continued and valued services ;

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and securing to him a provision, by which the evening of his days may be rendered comfortable.

We, the members of this meeting, have been urged to the adoption of the above resolutions by the following reasons :—

1. Because, that during a period of more than forty years, the Rev. James Everett has exercised his ministry in the Wesleyan Connexion with great acceptance and success.

2. Because, that, during that period, he has shown himself to be an ardent friend to our religious community, and an able expositor and defender of its doctrines, discipline and worship, both in his writings and public ministrations.

3. Because he has been the endeared friend of Daniel Isaac, William Dawson, and Adam Clarke, and many of the brightest ornaments of Wesleyan Methodism.

4. And especially because, during no small portion of that period, he has been intimately connected with our society in York, and we have had opportunities of observing his conduct and demeanour among us, and can testify that his walk and conversation have been unblemished, and his character irreproachable, and such as become an amiable and pure-minded minister of Christ.

We, therefore, cannot allow his character to be damaged in our estimation, or our feelings and conduct towards him to be at all changed, by bare

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SUSPICION of wrong-doing, in absence of all direct and positive proof."

Numerous other circuits passed similar resolutions which referred to *all* the expelled ministers.

With regard to outside observers, and the effect produced upon them, a very able writer spoke as follows:—"When the proceedings became known, the indignation of the press and the public knew no bounds. The majority of the metropolitan journals, including the 'Times,' the 'Morning Chronicle,' the 'Daily News,' the 'Morning Advertiser,' the 'Economist,' the 'Spectator,' the 'Standard of Freedom,' the 'Patriot,' the 'British Banner,' the 'Nonconformist,' the 'Christian Times,' with almost every provincial newspaper in the United Kingdom, together with the principal monthly and quarterly periodicals, united in denouncing the audacious tyranny of the Wesleyan Conference."

Of the strictures contained in the newspaper press one specimen from the "Times" must suffice. "Whether such proceedings be right or wrong, they are at best perfectly unique in this country. No other British tribunal possesses or claims the authority to put a 'brotherly question' to a *suspected* person, and require 'a frank and brotherly answer.' The rule of all our courts, both ecclesiastical and civil, is charity, which 'hopeth all things,' and which assumes every man innocent until he is

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proved to be guilty. These gentlemen are punished on mere suspicion, and for refusing to criminate themselves. We never heard the like in this country, at least in modern and peaceable times. Talk of the Star-Chamber! A man *might hold his tongue before that court*, stand his trial, and *escape if the evidence failed to support the charge*. Of the party themselves, the 'Fly Sheets,' or the usual practice of the Conference, we know next to nothing. We take these proceedings on the statement of the Conference, and we pronounce them at once a gross outrage on our old English principles of fair play."

We shall now quote opinions leaning somewhat to the other side, extracted from a well written work, entitled, "A Compendium of Methodism," by Rev. James Porter, A.M., then a minister in the Methodist Episcopal Church, America.

"There is another secession in progress, which seems more alarming than any of its predecessors. It has been maturing several years. The main object, thus far, has been to break down the Wesleyan Connexion; and it has not been altogether unsuccessful. Nearly sixty thousand members have already withdrawn, and still the storm rages. The disaffection arose from the rigidity and power of the Conference, or, more properly speaking, the position and leading members of it. Such men are always an annoyance to ambitious aspirants, how-

ever kind and prudent. They have been particularly so in the British Connexion, and have excited the envy, jealousy, and, perhaps, malignity of their inferiors. At all events, they have been pursued by them with great severity for many years. They were finally attacked in certain '*Fly Sheets*,' or tracts, and traduced in the most merciless manner; which elicited an inquisition for the detection of the writers, and resulted in the expulsion of Messrs. Everett, Dunn and Griffith, who, no doubt, deserved the punishment they received. Our only difficulty relates to the *process*, which, we *presume*, was according to the regulations of the Conference, as we are assured it received the sanction of nearly every member.

As to the merits of the controversy, we may not be in a condition to judge discreetly. Yet believing that many entertain mistaken notions, we can hardly forbear to say a few words on the subject. We give it as our opinion, therefore, that both parties are at fault. Though the Conference has often yielded, we think it has always been too fastidious about *little things*, and has imprudently *crushed* both men and measures it should *kindly* have *managed* and turned to good account. *Intolerance* of individual opinions and movements has been its chief fault. It has attempted to *govern* too much, and that by dint of ecclesiastical *authority*, rather than *moral influence*, and has often

aggravated the evil it would remedy. Had it adopted a written constitution many years ago, abolishing the distinction between the *platform* members and others, or at least making *platform* privileges equally eligible to all, and not dependent upon the *fancy* of the president and his favourites, it would have saved them much trouble. We think, too, that *open* Conferences would have been favourable to their interests; and have not a doubt that more frequent voting by *ballot*, rather than by hand vote, under the burning gaze of leading committee men, would have hindered those men from controlling everything, and given better satisfaction. But we are afraid these venerable fathers have coveted more of the offices, honours and emoluments of the Connexion than was proper. A few individuals have holden nearly all the offices for many years, notwithstanding others were equally qualified. Dr. Bunting, for instance, lived in London *eighteen* years out of forty-one, and Thomas Jackson nineteen years out of thirty-six; the former belonging to *twelve*, and the latter to *ten*, of the connexional committees most of the time. This concentration of influence in a *clique* of even the *best of men* is always offensive and impolitic.

But however faulty the Conference, it affords no justification of the reformers. If the '*Wesleyan Times*,' their organ, is a fair exponent of the spirit of the movement, it is evidently persecuting and

wicked in the extreme. No Christian can countenance it for a moment, however he may dislike the Conference. We had reached this conclusion, when an Irish preacher, now of our church, wrote us as follows :—

‘It is our deliberate conviction that the secession is more destitute of goodness than any that has occurred in Methodism. Whether the Conference is right or wrong, the Secessionists are not right. The spirit they manifest, and the means they employ, have nothing of God in them, but bear the impress of the “*evil one*,” in envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness. And it will be an evil day for Methodism, when it shall be administered by such men. We speak advisedly. We have no affinity for toryism, nor have we any sympathy for tyranny and oppression ; but having read most of the publications on both sides (the Fly Sheets not excepted), having sat nearly three days in the British Conference listening to the trial of the expelled ministers, and having a personal knowledge of nearly all the parties connected with the controversy, it is our deliberate judgment that there is a great misunderstanding of the subject in this country, and that justice is not done to the Conference.

From first to last, the venerable Dr. Bunting has been the principal object at which has been

aimed the envenomed arrows of this contest. We are not a blind and indiscriminating admirer of this great man. But when he has devoted his almost unequalled powers to our common Methodism, for fifty-two years, and stood by it in the hour of trial, when he has laboured and sacrificed more for it than any other living man, we cannot approve of hiding behind a mask and blasting his fair fame, now that he is just upon the verge of the grave. The Methodist community will never consent, on anonymous charges, and without trial or conviction, to doom any man to degradation, much less Jabez Bunting. We see him now, as he stood up before the Conference, in 1849, on the examination of character. President Jackson, on reading his name, inquired, "Is there any objection?" and there was a pause. His enemies, who had striven to overthrow his character, and send him down to the grave in disgrace, under the charge of being a *lazy, selfish, and deceitful tyrant*, were there. The eyes of *six hundred* Methodist preachers turned alternately to them and to him. That was the time and place to accuse him; but all were silent! Although he arose, the question was asked again, "*Is there any objection to Jabez Bunting?*" and again there was a pause. But no accuser appeared. With a voice suppressed by emotion, which gave additional interest to his venerable appearance never to be forgotten, Mr. Bunting ad-

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dressed his brethren in a brief but noble speech, denying the various accusations published against him, and calling upon those who had known him for fifty years to judge between him and his accusers. When he sat down, there was a burst of enthusiastic and repeated applause, in which every voice in the assembly was employed, except, perhaps, *three or four*.

What could he have done more? And what could his brethren have done less than to expel a noisy faction, who would not prefer a charge in the disciplinary way, nor cease to pursue them and their worthy fathers with falsehood and abuse. If the venerable Bishop Hedding should be placed in such a situation the hearts of American Methodists would burn with holy indignation, and they would drag his slanderers to light, and require them to sustain their assertions, or retract them; and should they decline to do either, they would be *ignominiously expelled.*' "

Not long after Conference, President Jackson issued another Declaration, intended to allay the strife, and to justify what the Conference had done. It was sent to each of the preachers, accompanied by the following letter.

“ Richmond, Dec. 26, 1849.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—The subjoined Declaration has been drawn up at the suggestion of a number

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of our brethren, and under a persuasion that a distinct and explicit avowal of our sentiments, on the questions it embodies, is imperatively called for at the present time, when strenuous attempts are made—by means of the press and public meetings, under the name of Methodist Reform—to engage our societies in schemes which, if carried into effect, would subvert the essential principles of our constitution as a religious community. If you approve of this Declaration, you are respectfully requested without delay to affix your name to it, and then return it, addressed to the Rev. Messrs. Holgate and Wilson, 24, City-road, London; in order that it may, with the signatures of the brethren, be published and circulated through the Connexion.

I am, my dear Brother,

Yours very sincerely,

THOMAS JACKSON,

President of the Conference.”

Whatever the effect of this “Declaration” might be it did not lessen the agitation; so far from any abatement, it increased yet more and more. What has been designated “The Campaign of 1849,” headed by the three expelled and their friends of the laity, was prosecuted with the most persistent determination. The writer before quoted says:—“In almost every town in England, Scot-

land, and Wales, public meetings were held. Exeter, Freemason's, and St. Martin's Halls, London; the Town Hall, Birmingham; St. Andrew's Hall, Norwich; the Free Trade Hall, Manchester; the Concert Room, York; the Broadmead Rooms, Bristol; the Corn Exchange, Wakefield; the Music Halls, in Leeds and Liverpool; and the Public Halls in Edinburgh and Glasgow, were literally packed with respectable and indignant audiences assembled to protest against the infamous proceedings of the Methodist Conference." Of the meetings referred to we cannot think, or speak approvingly. The inflammatory speeches delivered at them would fill volumes! but, of set purpose, they are all excluded from these pages, as things to be forgotten and the sooner the better. Miscellaneous multitudes were crowded together, composed of all classes, "religious and profane;" reminding one of a tumult spoken of in the Acts of the Apostles, where it is said, "Some cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly was confused; and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together." Excellent ministers, as well as other godly men, were maligned and caricatured in such a manner as to excite roars of laughter, and provoke to a course of conduct, at once a scandal to religion and a disgrace to the Christian name! As to consequences, how could they possibly be otherwise than sad in the

extreme? By hard words and cruel actions, on *both* sides, many a spirit was deeply wounded, and, we hesitate not to say, many a heart was broken! In many a family domestic peace was disturbed and destroyed. By reason of secessions and expulsions, in tens of thousands of instances, some of the loveliest societies in the Church were torn asunder and scattered. Zion mourned bitterly because her waste places were desolate; and some of them almost without an inhabitant. Far distant be the day—nay, may the day never come! when such scenes of desolation and sorrow shall again be witnessed.

Some extenuation can, and perhaps ought to be made on behalf of those who were so keenly smarting under the grievous wrongs which, as was generally believed, had been inflicted upon them. At the same time, such extravagant and exaggerated statements, as were again and again repeated, as well as the very offensive personalities so frequently indulged in, can have no justification; and must, therefore, be condemned. While all that we have described was passing, another party appeared upon the field of conflict; bent on the endeavour, at least, to restore order and quiet. They were called “Delegates of the People,” and assembled in the month of March, 1850. “After solemn and prayerful deliberation, they resolved to seek an interview with the President of the Con-

ference, in order to lay before him the complaints of their constituents. For this purpose three gentlemen were sent to the residence of the President at Richmond, to inquire when it would suit his convenience to receive the deputation, and also to inform him of the object of their mission. Mr. Jackson received them with courtesy, listened to their request, and then withdrew for a few moments. After a short deliberation, he returned, and delivered the following answer :—‘ Gentlemen, in the fear of God, I consider the present movement such a violation of our laws, that I decline an interview. I think it would be a breach of trust in me to receive the deputation.’

When the Delegates had acquainted the Societies with the result of their deliberations, and the repulse they had met with from the President, the excitement became every day more intense and general. The preachers saw that a storm of indignation and defiance was quickly gathering around them, and vainly sought to avert its fury by expelling all who were suspected of disloyalty to their supreme authority. The work of excision now began in earnest. Nearly every individual who had attended the Delegate Meeting was excommunicated. Whole classes and societies were cut off at a stroke. The entire Connexion became a scene of increased turmoil and strife. Petitions to the Conference were prepared, setting forth the


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grievances of the people, and praying the Conference to make such timely concessions as would restore peace, and promote the harmony and prosperity of the Body. Those petitions received upwards of fifty thousand signatures, and were placed in the hands of the Committee appointed by the Delegate Meeting, for presentation to the Conference. At length the Conference assembled in London. The Delegates resumed their sittings, and transmitted the following letter:—

“To the President, Secretary, and Members of the Wesleyan Conference, now assembled.

REV. SIRS,—The Committee of Privileges, appointed by the Eleventh Resolution of the Meeting of Delegates from the Wesleyan Societies, assembled in Albion Chapel, Moorfields, on the 12th of March last, and following days, respectfully intimate that they are now prepared to meet with the Conference, or a Committee to be appointed by the Conference, agreeably to the terms of the said resolution, which is inclosed.

The Committee will be obliged by a reply, if possible, by the close of to-morrow morning's sitting of the Conference, informing them when and where it will be convenient for the said Meeting to be held.

The Committee of Privileges, having a large

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number of numerously-signed memorials entrusted to them for presentation to the Conference, will also be glad to be informed when the Conference will receive them.

We have the honour to be, Rev. Sirs, on behalf of the said Committee, your most humble and obedient Servants,

(Signed) ROBERT SWAN STANLEY,  
JOSEPH MASSINGHAM,  
*Secretaries.*

11, Exeter Hall, July 31, 1850."

To this letter the Conference replied as follows:—

"Wesleyan Conference, August 3, 1850.

GENTLEMEN,—On behalf of the Conference, we beg to acknowledge the receipt of your communication, addressed 'to the President, Secretary, and Members of the Conference,' and purporting to be an intimation from a 'Committee of Privileges, appointed by the Eleventh Resolution of a Meeting of Delegates from the Wesleyan Societies, assembled in Albion Chapel, Moorfields, on the 12th of March last, and following days,' to the effect that the Members of the said 'Committee' are 'prepared to meet with the Conference, or a Committee appointed by the Conference, agreeably to the terms of the said resolution;' and that you

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'will be glad to be informed when the Conference will be prepared to receive certain memorials,' stated by you to be 'entrusted to the said Committee for presentation to the Conference.' In reply to that communication, we are directed by the Conference to remind you that the Conference has been, and is, at all times, prepared to receive and consider with respectful attention, any communications in the way of memorials or otherwise, addressed to it, on matters touching either local or Connexional interests, provided that such memorials, or other communications, proceeded from members of society in their *individual capacity*, or from meetings duly called and constituted according to our existing rules.

With respect to the communication which you have forwarded, it is scarcely necessary to remind you that the Committee, of which you represent yourselves to be the secretaries, was appointed at a meeting which had no authority to make such an appointment, and that the existence and action of a Committee so appointed, are a deliberate and flagrant violation of the discipline of Methodism.

The Conference has good reason for doubting whether any single society, or circuit, or body of trustees, in its *collective* capacity, appointed any individual as a delegate to the meeting held in London on the 12th of March last. And, even

supposing all the persons who attended that meeting to have been formally and *bona fide* appointed representatives or delegates from the societies, or circuits, or trusts, with which they professed to be respectively connected, still the Conference is solemnly persuaded that such a meeting of confederated delegations, especially considering the circumstances under which it was called, and the objects which it was proposed thereby to accomplish, was totally at variance with the great principles and positive regulations on which we depend, in a great degree, as a Connexion, for the due maintenance of Christian order, and the edification and peace of our societies.

Under these circumstances, the Conference, having regard to the purity and the welfare of the societies under its care, and to its solemn obligations to maintain inviolate the disciplinary system of Wesleyan Methodism, deems itself bound to adhere to the principles stated at large in the Minutes of 1835, and to the resolution then avowed, not to hold communication with any association, confederacy, or committee, organized on 'divisive and disorderly principles,' like those which characterize the proceedings of the parties with whom you are unhappily identified.

The Conference, therefore, respectfully declines to make any appointment for holding a meeting with the Committee which you represent, or for

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receiving memorials to which your letter refers as having been entrusted to your care.

We are, Gentlemen, on behalf of the Conference,

Yours respectfully,

(Signed) JOHN BEECHAM, President.

JOHN HANNAH, Secretary.

To Messrs. R. S. STANLEY and JOSEPH MASSINGHAM, Exeter Hall, Strand."

Although thus "repulsed" the Delegates were succeeded by yet another party called, this time, "Moderationists;" consisting of those who had not seceded, nor were *as yet* expelled. Their object seemed to be to throw oil upon the troubled waters and effect a reconciliation between the complainants and the Conference. Accordingly—"A number of highly respectable and influential officers in the Body, who had taken no active part in the agitation, but who were deeply grieved on account of the havoc which surrounded them on every hand, met together, to consider some general plan of pacification which might be proposed for the consideration of the 'Memorial Committee' about to meet in London. Hence, at a meeting of officers and members of the Wesleyan Methodist Society, voluntarily assembled from various parts of the kingdom, in the Committee-room of the Town Hall, Birmingham, on Wednesday, December 10th, 1851, for the purpose of conferring in friendly and mutual

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conversation on the disastrous state of Methodism, and the measures necessary for its remedy, John Ratcliff, Esq., in the chair, the following Declaration was unanimously adopted :—

‘1. That we regard the dissensions and afflictions of our Connexion with extreme grief and anxiety, and do most ardently desire that the harmony and happiness that once distinguished the Body may be restored.

2. That in our calm and deliberate judgment, our existing disasters are mainly attributable to the great changes that have been made in our connexional polity, during the last thirty years, by which the balance of power in the Connexion has been deranged; many important functions committed to the local courts by the Constitution of Methodism, as settled by the regulations of 1795 and 1797, having been *resumed* by the Conference.

3. That while we acknowledge the divine institution of the Christian Ministry, and the responsibility of ministers to their Lord and Master, we do conscientiously believe that their claim to the exclusive government of the church by virtue of rights inherent in their office, is destitute of a scriptural basis, and repugnant to the spirit and letter of our Constitution; the records of the Conference during the early years of the present century, and the known usages of our elder and larger societies in every part of the kingdom.

4. That for the restoration of peace and confidence, we deem it necessary that membership in Methodism be held inviolable until the vote of the Leaders' Meeting be taken, not only on questions of *fact*, but also on the points of *criminality* and *penalty*.

5. That it is also necessary that the same principle be applied to the official position of local officers.

6. That the disciplinary authority of our local courts under the presidency of their superintendents should be subject only to a *mixed* court of appeal.

7. That *lay influence*, in Connexional Committees, would be far more satisfactory, if subject to *lay election*, instead of ministerial nomination.

8. That Quarterly Meetings should be free from restriction in memorialising Conference on Connexional matters.

9. That as many of those persons who are now in a position of hostility to the authorities of the Connexion have been severed from us, or have left us under strongly exciting and irritating circumstances, we venture to express our earnest hope, that Christian generosity and kindness, rather than harshness and repulsiveness, will be cherished and manifested towards any of them desiring to be again united to us in church fellowship.

10. That the rules of the Connexion should

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be simplified and published in as commodious a form as possible, "for the benefit and convenience of all classes in the body."

11. That no new rule, adopted by the Conference, shall be obligatory upon the societies, until sanctioned by a majority of the Quarterly Meetings; the sense of each circuit on such rule to be taken at the June Quarterly Meeting.

12. That, looking to the fact of many persons having left our societies in distress and despair, in consequence of their having lost all hope of a satisfactory adjustment of our Connexional difficulties, and it having been further ascertained that others are contemplating the same step; we deem it the imperative duty of all who desire the prosperity of our Connexion to unite in promoting reconciliation between hostile parties, with a view to the restoration of peace and harmony.' "

We are informed that this "Declaration" was immediately signed by upwards of *seven hundred* trustees, stewards, leaders, and local preachers; and a deputation was appointed by the Declarationists to wait upon the President of the Conference, Dr. Hannah, for the purpose of explaining their views, and also to request him to present their manifesto to the Memorial Committee, when it should meet.

It should here be observed, that a number of memorials had been sent to the Conference of 1851



—in a “constitutional” way—from various societies, praying that certain concessions might be made to the demands of the people; whereupon the Conference appointed what was designated a “Memorial Committee,” composed of fifty-four *of its own number*, to meet on some early day, to examine the suggestions contained in the memorials, as well as other communications; and to report on the same to the next Conference. It was to this Committee that the deputation just alluded to wished to have access. A note was addressed to Dr. Hannah, in which the writer requested to be informed when it would be convenient to receive the deputation. The Doctor, however, refused to receive such deputation, but promised to take charge of the Declaration, if sent to him, and also to take the most seasonable opportunity of laying it before the Memorial Committee.

“ Shortly after this, Dr. Hannah decided to call together a number of ‘ principal lay friends,’ to confer with himself and the Memorial Committee upon the results of their deliberations. When the gentlemen invited by the President assembled in London, he addressed them thus:—‘ I do not wish to trouble this assembly with any solitary feelings of my own. I have had to refuse invitations to gentlemen associated to myself by kindly ties, and with other venerable friends departed to their rest. I feel that the duty, the responsibility, rested upon myself, and on

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myself alone. I enquired what I thought was my duty under the circumstances; I have done it; and I am ready to abide by it, whatever may be the consequences. I have *designedly and conscientiously* avoided sending an invitation to this meeting, to any gentleman whatever who has appended his name to the Birmingham Declaration. I have done it, and I abide by it, for it appeared to me that the President of the Wesleyan Conference, himself a servant of the Conference and the Connexion, has no right, no authority to give official sanction, by such invitation, to principles which he is deeply convinced are adverse to the primitive constitution of our fathers.' ”

Notwithstanding this,—“ The ‘Mediation Movement’ speedily assumed a formidable appearance; every post brought additional signatures, until the number of Declarationists exceeded two thousand,—principally officers in the body. Every effort was now put forth by the ruling party to neutralise the generous efforts of these excellent men. The most virulent and cowardly attacks were made upon the characters of the gentlemen who had been most active in promoting the Mediation Movement. Indeed, every gentleman of mark, who had taken part in the Birmingham Meeting, was made an object for the shafts of calumny and persecution; their motives were impugned, their reputation

assailed, and their Connexional status damaged and undermined.”

“ When the Conference of 1852 had assembled in Sheffield, the Mediation Committee forwarded the following letter :—

‘ TO THE WESLEYAN METHODIST MINISTERS IN
CONFERENCE ASSEMBLED.

DEAR FATHERS AND BRETHREN,—From an intense desire for the recovery of peace to our afflicted Connexion, and for the restoration of those to our religious fellowship, who desire the privilege, we adopted and signed the Declaration of Wesleyan officers and members, drawn up at a meeting, held in the Town Hall, Birmingham, on the 10th of December last. Being now assembled in the town of Sheffield, as a Committee, representing about 2,000 persons, chiefly officers of the Body, whose names are appended to that document, *for the purpose of presenting it to the Conference*, we respectfully request, that you will inform us, as speedily as possible, at what hour you will be pleased to receive us for that purpose.

We approach the Conference with the most cordial desire for the beneficial influence of the ministry upon general society, and for the harmony and happiness of all classes connected with Wesleyan Methodism. Actuated only by that desire in

our present proceedings, we trust our application will be regarded with the kindness and confidence which we ourselves would cherish, and are anxious to promote.

Signed on behalf of the Committee,
W. M. FAWCETT, Chairman.' ”

“ The Conference,” says Mr. Martin, “ declined to receive or negotiate with any deputation, and, in a lengthened reply, indulged in the most rancorous invective against the laudable efforts of the ‘ Moderation party.’ Although the Conference had to report a further decrease of upwards of TWENTY THOUSAND officers and members during the year, making the total loss to the Connexion in two years nearly EIGHTY THOUSAND, the same spirit of lofty insolence and overbearing tyranny characterized its proceedings which had distinguished the three preceding ones.”

Having failed after repeated and certainly patient, persevering efforts to effect the alterations they desired in the laws, polity, and general administration of the Conference Connexion, and being weary of agitation, which seemed to be unavailing and useless, the Methodist Reformers settled down into separate congregations and societies. Having voluntarily left, or in too many instances, having been forcibly driven, from the sanctuaries where their fathers had worshipped

before them, they sought new homes, built new chapels, appointed and maintained their own ministers. For several years they were known as "The Reform Union," or "The United Methodist Reformers." Deeming it inexpedient, however, to establish themselves as a separate Body permanently, they turned with friendly look towards "The Wesleyan Methodist Association." Very soon the desire for union was expressed by mutual communication. Negotiations were commenced and conducted by such men as the Revs. R. Eckett, —a man of great force of will, but of rare ability— J. Peters, J. Molineux ; Messrs. Petrie, Johnson, Rinder, on the one side ; and the Revs. J. Everett, W. Griffith—Messrs. Sharpley, Chipchase and Coleman on the other. After necessary preliminary arrangements as to foundation principles, the two communities became one—under the denominational name of "The United Methodist Free Churches ;" and, if we are not mistaken, the Rev. James Everett was chosen the President of the first Conference, or Annual Assembly, after the union had taken place. We regard this Body as the most democratic of any of the Methodist Branches, though it is not improbable that, as time goes on, it may become a little more conservative. Still, there is no particular reason for complaint or for fear. A church that has stood the test of nearly five-and-twenty years, without agita-

tion, disruption, or secession of any consequence, may justly be supposed to rest upon a true and solid basis. This community is doing a great and good work. And with such men as the Revs. J. Gutteridge, S. S. Barton, W. Reed, T. Hacking, T. Newton, E. Boaden, R. Chew, J. S. Withington, M. Miller, and others of kindred spirit, its ministry is likely to be effective and permanent. It is our sincere desire that this section of the Saviour's Church may be blest with continued and ever-increasing prosperity.

CHAPTER VIII.

LESSONS AND CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS.

THE LESSONS suggested by the history we have now traced are various and important. Two or three may be noticed. The first is the danger connected with the possession of irresponsible, arbitrary, absolute power. The love of power—a word not easy to define—seems to be a principle inherently existing in the hearts of “kings, and all that are in authority;” and when once obtained is generally held with a tenacity, that nothing but a force superior to itself is able to relax. Luther said that, “Every man was born with a pope in his stomach !” However that may be, there dwells in human nature, universally considered, something like an instinctive desire to govern and to rule. It is very certain, however, that the possession of power, whether mental, kingly, political, or ecclesiastical, will, if not kept within duly prescribed and proper limits, generate pride, arrogance, presumption. It will beget an overbearing, despotic, persecuting spirit. And we venture to

say that no man, nor any number of men, can make a legitimate use of either assumed or delegated power, unless assisted by wisdom and grace divine. Moreover, this power is not unfrequently positively injurious to those who possess it. Dr. Southey has well remarked that—"The person whose moral nature is not injured by the possession of absolute power must be even more elevated above his fellow-creatures in wisdom and virtue than in authority." Possibly Mr. Wesley himself was an exception to the general rule; albeit, his power was, as we have before seen, absolute and all pervading. In his "Connexional Economy," recently published, Dr. Rigg says,—“Not only was Mr. Wesley’s authority universal and absolute when he chose to exert it, but in the government of the various societies and circuits the laity had no voice or share whatever, much less had they any part, direct or indirect, in general legislation. The leaders themselves had no more power or prerogative in the government of the societies than, to use Mr. Wesley’s own word, ‘the door-keeper.’” The misfortune was that, as far as it was possible, by a legal document, he transferred this power to his successors—to the Conference. Dr. Rigg avers that, “from the *beginning* he meant to” do this. We are not aware there is any proof of the correctness of *this* statement in the writings or works of Mr. Wesley; and therefore, it can only

be accepted as an expression of Dr. Rigg's personal opinion. Dr. Whitehead, the intimate friend and, if we remember rightly, the first biographer of Wesley, seems to have been of a *different* opinion. In the "Life" of that great and good man, speaking of the "Poll Deed," he makes use of these words: "The reader should be apprised, that, neither the design of it, nor the words of the several clauses, are to be imputed to Mr. Wesley. So far was he from forming any design of a Deed of this kind, that I have good evidence to assert, it was some time before he could be prevailed upon to comply with the proposal; and, as in most other cases where he followed the same guide, he soon found reason to repent. That Mr. Wesley did actually repent of signing this Deed, is pretty evident from the following letter, which he wrote about a year afterwards, and committed to a friend to deliver to the Conference, at their first meeting after his decease." [This letter may be found in the first chapter of this work.] The Doctor, it is said, gave great offence by the publication of these sentiments, but justified himself by these further remarks: "It would be improper, in a work of this kind, to pass over this Deed without making an observation or two upon it. Now, the first thing that strikes me, is the title itself, 'A Declaration and Establishment of the Conference of the People called Methodists.' This surely is a most incongruous title. It

is well known that the people called Methodists, never held a Conference since Methodism existed. The Conference is an assembly of itinerant preachers only (except two or three clergymen); and its members are not assembled by any authority derived from the people. When sitting, it exercises powers which are neither derived from the people, nor under any control by them. It elects members into its own body, or excludes them at pleasure: it makes regulations or laws, not only for the itinerant preachers, but for all ranks and orders of persons in the societies; and while these things are transacted, neither local preachers, trustees of chapels, stewards, leaders, nor any of the people, have a single voice, or a single representative in the assembly. The people have no check, no balance of power, against any regulation or law the Conference may choose to decree. It is difficult, therefore, to conceive why this assembly of preachers was called 'The Conference of the People called Methodists;' unless it was to give the people a hint, that they ought to have some representatives in an assembly where laws are made, by which they, as Methodists, are to be governed."

Returning to the question of the transmission of power, it has been wisely observed that—"If Mr. Wesley could have *transmitted* with the *authority*, his intelligence, his piety, his candour, his

forbearance, and the same relations in which he stood to the people, as the FATHER of the family, there would have been the less likelihood of abuse ; but it was transmitted to men still more erring than himself ; to men, who showed their love of power, by embracing opportunities for its unlawful exercise.”

Hence the evils and troubles which have from time to time resulted. It must be admitted that the whole system of Wesleyan Methodism is far more liberal now than it was at first, and it is not unlikely it will yet become more and more so.

Another lesson to be learnt is—That Christian communities should be so organized as to effect an equipoise of power in the general administration, as between ministers and people, securing the mutual rights and liberties of both classes. With regard to Church government and its laws we shall say but little, for there has been so much written, and too often in angry controversy, on the subject. Besides, on this matter there does not appear to be any specific *data* in the New Testament to guide us. General principles, and *few* of them, are laid down, but details are left to be moulded or modified according as different times and circumstances may require. In his lectures on Ecclesiastical Polity, Dr. Davidson thus speaks :—“ The religion of Christ is occupied with general principles applicable to all the circumstances in which His people can

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be placed. Under the ancient dispensation they were treated as children in a state of pupilage; and therefore specific directions were given them on all points relating to faith and worship. But under the spiritual economy introduced by Christ, moral precepts are laid down, whose application to particular cases is left to the judgment of Christians. If, then, nothing relating to the external order of churches be left to discretion, there is an anomaly in the mode of teaching adopted in the New Testament. There is a departure from the ordinary mode of instruction which it follows: its characteristic peculiarity is abandoned.

We hesitate not to express our belief that there are the *essentials* and the *circumstantials*—the things that may not be accommodated to times, places, and circumstances—and those that may be so. No strict mathematical line is drawn between them, because that would be out of place in moral subjects. In distinguishing between the unchangeable and the mutable, Christian wisdom is fairly and properly exercised. Men endowed with sense, reason, and reflection, are to judge of the general features, as distinguished from the minor matters to which no importance attaches.

The expression, *legislation*, is not fairly applicable to our view, and therefore we disclaim it. And that we impugn the sufficiency of Scripture is not true. It is a sufficient guide in all things per-

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taining to the nature and acts of God's worship ; though silent as to many attendant circumstances belonging to that worship. General principles, comprehending particular cases, are enumerated. In the application of these, it is true that abuses may be introduced ; but that is no valid argument against them. 'Let all things be done to edifying.' 'Let all things be done decently and in order.' The wisdom of the Christian will keep such directions in mind. He will look at the tendency of every measure that may be introduced in the government of churches ; and should it contribute to the edifying of the society, or to its proper compactness, symmetry, and increase, he will not hesitate to adopt it as accordant with the mind of Christ. 'Apostolic precept and example are our ultimate appeal, but not after a mechanical fashion.' "

We have often thought, and still think, there are too many law-makers in these days, and therefore too many laws, in connection with the government of our various churches. If they were fewer and simpler they would be more easily understood, more readily obeyed. The statute book has become so elaborate, so ponderous, as to need "Digests," "Compendiums," "Commentaries"—what number we do not just now remember—like so many "Blackstones," to classify and explain the laws or rules the book contains. And if we

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have not too many "Church Courts" also, we have surely more than sufficient. There are the "lower" courts, the "higher" courts, and the "highest" courts of all! Sometimes when we think of them we are almost bewildered, and look with longing eyes to the *outer* court, in order to escape from all the *inner* ones. The consequence is, nor does it seem unreasonable, we have what are designated, "Additional Guards and Securities to our People." As though ministers were not in any wise to be trusted, and as if both parties must alternately regard each other with doubt and suspicion. O that in principle and practice we could get back to the times of the first apostles and Christians—

"With grace abundantly endued,  
A pure, believing multitude,  
They all were of one heart and soul,  
And only love inspired the whole!"

This history may further indicate the propriety and necessity of granting free expression of opinions, also the right of publishing them, when it is deemed expedient to do so. It seems to us that Mr. Wesley himself did this, and allowed others to do the same. Just look at what took place at the very first Conference, that of 1744. In the printed Minutes it is thus stated:—

"It is desired that all things be considered as in the immediate presence of God.

That we may meet with a single eye, and as little children, who have everything to learn.

That every point which is proposed, may be examined to the foundation.

That every person may speak freely whatever is in his heart ; that every question which may arise, should be thoroughly debated and settled.

Need we be fearful of doing this ? What are we afraid of ? Of overturning our first principles ?

If they are false, the sooner they are overturned the better.

If they are true, they will bear the strictest examination."

If his successors had followed this example, we cannot but think, much evil would have been prevented. Soon after his decease the Conference, as before seen, expelled one of its own ministers for writing and publishing a pamphlet; and in several instances the like act was subsequently repeated. What plea can be set up to justify the exercise of a power so arbitrary and despotic as this ? Some may say, as, indeed, they have said in effect, "Mr. Kilham should have appealed to the Conference and not to the people; it disturbed and unsettled them." Is it certain that he did not first declare his views to the Conference—and was unheeded by them ? Be that as it may, wherein was it unjust for him to appeal to the people *outside* the Conference ? Others have been so considerate as to

say "he had better have kept his opinions to himself." Generous souls! they would give a man this liberty, which he possessed before the boon was bestowed, and can never be deprived of. Curious liberty this! "Liberty to hold an opinion is but the half of freedom, unless there be liberty to diffuse it," says John Angell James, speaking of principles of church polity. "If important to us, they are important to others," he adds, "and ought to be propagated as well as held." And what is there to fear, we ask, in all this? Look at the subject calmly and dispassionately. Here is a man, a minister of good report, who has certain views affecting, as he thinks, the welfare and prosperity of the church with which he is connected. He deems it to be his duty to make those views widely known, and has recourse to the only means available for the purpose. He publishes a pamphlet, intended for both ministers and people. Well, now, those who read it are surely capable of understanding what they read. They will judge as to its merits or demerits. If the pamphlet is found to contain nothing of worth or importance, why, it will go for nothing, and there will be an end of it. If, on the other hand, it be found to contain statements, principles, and arguments, which commend themselves to the judgment and approval of those more immediately concerned, why, then, the issue or result will be accordingly;



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and certainly *ought* to be. We have, in this country at all events, the liberty of the press; and when there is just cause we must use this liberty, not “for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.”

To attempt to prevent this from being done, or to inflict punishment when it *is* done, is something like acting over again what is thus recorded—“They answered and said unto him, thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out.”

Our history may present one more suggestion, namely: That when the office-bearers or members of a church have certain just complaints to prefer, they should have ready access to the executive or rulers of that church, by whom their complaints should be patiently listened to and, if possible, their grievances redressed. During the various agitations in Methodism such access has often been sought for, but in how many instances has it been obtained? We are not aware of more than one; and even in that case, it was only a small committee of ministers appointed by the Conference, not the Conference itself, to which access was granted. On different occasions petitions and memorials, on subjects of polity or discipline, *have* been received; but audiences, for direct personal negotiation, there have been none. And what is the Wesleyan Conference—or any other—that it

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should refuse to confer with the people, by whom it is sustained and without whom it could not exist? One naturally thinks that in troublous times, times of commotion and fear, the Conference would make the first approach, and say to the people, or to those who claimed to be their representatives, "Come and let us reason together; let us look each other in the face, and see if we cannot, by mutual explanation or mutual expostulation, adjust matters, and restore a settled confidence, a lasting peace." The blessed results of such a course cannot for a moment be doubted. To plead as an excuse for not taking this course, amongst other things equally frivolous, "the pressure of Conference business," is the merest trifling, and those who urge that plea ought to be severely rebuked. The ordinary business of Conference might justly be kept in abeyance, when matters affecting the weal and happiness—it may be—of tens of thousands, require the gravest and most serious consideration. Or, if time be wanting, let that be secured which is little better than wasted, in receiving vain adulation, votes of thanks, "honour one of another."

Judging from appearances, it seems probable that what has just been referred to, as proper and desirable, will be gradually and at length fully accomplished. The system of Methodism is one of remarkable elasticity, and, if allowed, can adapt

itself, as far as is right and safe, to surrounding circumstances and changes. In past ages it has rendered immense benefit to the English nation, and to other nations of the earth. Some have said, and are at liberty to say it again, that "Methodism has had its day, done its work." Still, it renews its strength, and it may be safely predicted that a future lies before it, brighter and more glorious than it has ever yet known. Within its pale there is something for everyone of its members to do. Its agencies, vast and diversified, are, by the divine blessing, well fitted to convert sinners from the error of their ways, and to train them for the heavenly kingdom. Let, then, Wesleyan Methodism—Methodism in all its branches—be carried out in all its integrity. Let us have Methodist chapels, Methodist preachers, such as our fathers were, all aglow with zeal for God and the salvation of immortal souls. Let us not be too much occupied with the secularities of the church, to the neglect of what is more vital and spiritual. In this direction we apprehend serious, increasing danger, especially to ministers, who will do well to remember what is recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, "Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples *unto them*, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy

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Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word." Let us, we further ask, not attach undue importance to talent, respectability, or even wealth itself. Above all, let us solemnly ponder the deeply important truth which the great Master has long been seeking to teach His faithful followers, "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." Oh! is it not here, after all, that we find the greatest want of all the churches of the present day? The unction from above, the baptism of fire. Do we wish to see the prosperity of Zion? Are we greatly desirous that He who hath redeemed His people "should see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied?" And when shall this be? Not "until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest. Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field. And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever." Oh! that He, with whom is the residue of the Spirit, would pour it out, in richest effusion, upon all His chosen servants, enabling them to make more signal and aggressive movements on the usurped dominions of the prince of darkness, marching from conquest to still further victory,

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until the prayer taught us by the Saviour, "Thy kingdom come," shall be accomplished in all its fulness, and fully it cannot be accomplished, until the joyful acclaim be heard in all lands, and re-echoed from the heaven of heavens, "The kingdoms of this world are become *the kingdoms* of our Lord, and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever."

Whether the time will ever come when the several sections of the Methodist family will be united to the parent body, is a problem which of course cannot now be solved. This is a matter on which opinions have been, as they still are, numerous and conflicting. Some have thought it a great pity and just cause for reproach, that those who preach exactly the same doctrines, and have similar modes of worship, should exist as separate denominations, called by different names. Others, again, are of opinion that formal union is inexpedient, that the Methodist bodies can effect more real, spiritual good if allowed to continue in their distinct spheres of action. It strikes us, however, very forcibly, there are considerations which might render a real union most desirable. In many of our country villages there are two or three chapels, occupied by various Methodist societies, where one would comfortably accommodate all that attend the other places of worship. And so it is in many of our larger towns. The consequence is, that

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much labour runs to waste, and the interest in each place is often found to be small and feeble, whereas, if they were joined together, this state of things, so much to be regretted, would cease. At the same time, such a “community—free, great, glorious, and happy—would be a blessing to England, to the Empire, and to the globe !”

But we fear there are formidable difficulties in the way, connected with church polity, with ministerial prerogative, and it is not easy to say how or when they will be removed.

Well, if there should be no sectional union effected, and the various churches of Methodism should still dwell apart, they may, nevertheless, be one in affection, one in spirit, one in purpose, and, true to their Sovereign Lord, be found side by side, in the foremost ranks of those, “who earnestly contend for the faith which was delivered unto the saints.”



